

THOSE
QUARRELSOME
BONAPARTES

Robert Gordon Anderson



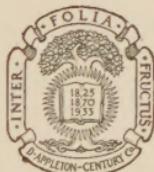


THOSE
QUARRELSOME BONAPARTES

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by

ROBERT GORDON ANDERSON



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To

HEWITT H. HOWLAND

CREATIVE EDITOR AND LOYAL FRIEND



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THOSE QUARRELSOME BONAPARTES

CHAPTER I

Corsica and a Shabby Lieutenant

IN the later seventeen hundreds when the fall of the Bastille was a vivid memory, and the Reign of Terror still to come, a young man returned from his regiment in alien France to his home at Ajaccio in the island of Corsica. Of worldly goods, now that he had left his much-loved books packed up in quarters, he had nothing: that is, besides the junior lieutenant's uniform, rather worn, on his thin malarial figure; a few letters from some scarecrow Revolutionary officials in Paris; a much battered little portmanteau with a change of linen; and in his purse four months' pay or about three hundred francs.

It was little with which to carve one's fortune; but perhaps these things too should be noted about him: a quick incisive stride; an equally incisive way of giving orders, absurd in a youngster just turning twenty-one and five feet six inches; a sound knowledge of history, mathematics, and military tactics; and a pair of imperious eyes burning out of sallow, almost yellowish features. Also he had, when not sunk in the brooding melancholy that still held over from adolescence, an air of unusual energy and, despite his unhealthy color and apparent frailty of frame, something of the iron and vitality

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of Plutarch's men. Outside of this equipment—and the dreams in his head—he had, then, precisely nothing.

Perhaps, however, he was to capitalize it in a way little suspected by his townspeople. Certainly they would have laughed, had any one prophesied such a thing; and they were at the time not at all proud of him. To be sure, they were a rather fractious, though a naturally kindly and hardy people, much given to suspicions and to feuds and little pleased with anybody. Then there were always too many factions on the island for any one to be generally popular, since one must take sides; and the Bonapartes up on the via Malerbe were nothing if not partizan. Besides, though they were of patrician descent and one of the leading families of Ajaccio, therefore to be looked up to, it is hard for peasant or shopkeeper to reverence a family known all too well. Familiarity, after all, does breed a sort of contempt for one's betters, particularly in unsettled times when there are of necessity altercations over shopkeepers' bills and the ownership of flocks, vineyards, and what not, and when the neighbors recall quite clearly this same junior lieutenant and his brothers and sisters as an unruly lot and, if not actually tatterdemalion, at least dressed in none too well-fitting made-overs, fighting, biting, and scratching their playmates and each other, and in turn defending each other with equal violence.

Though one of the chief ports of the island, Ajaccio was, in those years, a small town and nothing to be particularly proud of. Still, it was decidedly picturesque as it lay in the golden sunshine, this late summer afternoon. And from the hills it all looked peaceful enough—a slumbering fortress by the shore, the governor's palace and the

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cathedral towers, and a dozen squares or so of clustering dwellings, of varying heights, and gray and creamy, or old ivory in hue. As you looked down upon it, three wide chinks betrayed the elm- and plane-shaded avenues; and many narrow slits between the roofs showed innumerable little alleys, softened occasionally by the rounded green of mulberry, olive, citron, almond, and lemon; and all set down within a square mile of city wall—bastioned at the angles—on the blue waters of the Gulf, with the snow coronals of the inland peaks visible, Naples fashion, beyond it to the East.

The scene then was serene enough seeming, particularly when you heard the bells of the cathedral and of the Convent of San Francesco which lay outside the walls among the pasturing sheep and the vineyards. But if you left the governor's palace, built long before Genoa sold the island to France, and traversed the poorer quarters, past the hovels of stone and stucco, and through the tiny alleys roughly cobbled and sloping to gutters in the center, often channeling runnels of milk with bits of stale cheese and offal, you would come to the better section and see other signs. Here the houses, though they shouldered each other quite as closely, loomed taller and had the pleasant time-worn façades and lofty shuttered windows one sees on the Ile St.-Louis by the Seine or in old Tuscan cities. And here and there were peaceful old-time gardens. But if you looked closer, you might observe bullet-scars on the walls or holes made by cannon and now and then a ruin of black timbers and gray powdering mortar, overgrown with clambering myrtle and vines.

The Abbé Fesch, Napoleon's uncle, and half-brother to the young lieutenant's mother, Letizia, observed for the

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thousandth time these signs, as he made his clerical rounds. He saw also, when he came to a vantage-point on the wide Street of the Fountains, a felucca at anchor behind the mole. The two lateen spars were folded like peaceful curved quills on a background of waters of that hue which is neither ultramarine nor myrtle nor yet larkspur, simply Mediterranean blue, and which had, he thought as he fanned himself with his broad clerical hat, both peace and exaltation in it. But he saw on the deck the blue coats of the soldiers; others too were moving about the citadel and on the corvette lying, with its single tier of guns, to windward of the felucca. And those uniforms belonged to France, which the abbé, like all good Corsicans, long had hated. Indeed, hadn't he as a boy, with all his kinsmen, been chased by the French out of the house on the via Malerbe, to camp on the top of Monte Rotondo—he could see it now sparkling in the sunshine—ten thousand feet above the sea? Two months, that was, before Napoleon was born.

The incongruity between serene setting and portentous atmosphere was even more apparent when he neared his cousin Ramolino's house. As he well knew, half of the army was loyal to the new National Assembly in Paris, half to the king, who sat, virtually a prisoner, blind to the oncoming deluge, mending his pet clocks in the Tuileries. And here in the market-place, officers in blue coats, white small-clothes, gilt epaulets, with red sashes around their waists, strode among the olive-skinned market women, now kicking aside their baskets of spinach or cabbage and cheese, again tossing gold coins, still stamped with the image of the king, on the shopkeepers' counters. Knots of citizens, some of them strange emis-

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saries from Paris, others bourgeois of the town, with red, white, and blue cockades in their triangle hats, stood in front of the Jacobin Club—that club which his nephews had so foolishly organized—foretelling with relish what would soon happen to those selfsame officers.

But as for most of the townspeople, they cared neither for Revolution nor for king, only for Corsica and Paoli, old Papa Paoli who had fought so long against the French and who might yet fool them. The dark-eyed women drowsing among the baskets eyed both blue coats and red cockades with equal malevolence; an artisan sharpening his knife whetted its edge with too significant care. And here came riding into town hill-men from the interior—swart meager little fellows, clothed in scarlet and black coats and breeches made from the wool of their own black sheep, bestriding shaggy ponies, their women walking, in true Corsican fashion, on foot beside them. At each belt was a cartridge pouch and a stiletto, over each shoulder a gun; and each, when his eye lighted on these enemies of his country, muttered curses, *sotto voce*, as he rode.

It was an image of war in times of truce, and though Fesch himself was too orderly for that, he knew those brown-cowled priests he saw walking with militant stride, over the cobbles, had daggers under their girdles and quite near the crucifix.

The abbé sighed as he passed within the cool shadow of the city wall. Left to themselves these Corsicans would have been peaceful enough. But what could you expect when since the year One they had been harassed by invaders from every Mediterranean port and some from far beyond the seas?

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The Bonapartes, too, though the boys were meddling with these revolutionary upstarts, were true Corsicans, having come from Florence in 1529; the Ramolini, the abbé's mother's people, from the same town. As for himself, he had only a half-measure of the strain. His mother and Letizia's were the same; but his father had left some Swiss orderliness in his blood, while they had to the full the gift for intrigue from those centuries with the Medicis in Italian cities, and, superimposed on that, the loyalty and sterner virtues of these hills. Yet he loved them all—though he had not cared for Letizia's husband, a charming but unreliable fellow, shifting with the winds. But where was his rascally nephew? He wanted to have a word with the boy, away from his mother and his great-uncle, the old archdeacon Lucien, who now lay bedridden and querulous. Alone, he might take the too active young man to task, or at least find out what were the contents of this political pie he was having such a finger in.

At last he caught sight of him—the thin face, the thin eager figure in the worn lieutenant's uniform—rising and falling on his toes, as he harangued some Paoli adherents he had buttonholed.

“Giving them a dose of Rousseau prate and Jacobin calomel—and from their faces they seem to be suspicious of their young physician!” said the abbé to himself, as he hurried over the cobbles of the square.

But it was only a glimpse of his nephew that he caught, for, having finished his harangue, that young man paused just long enough to wave a “Good morning, uncle!” then ran up the steps of his club, whose precincts Fesch was unwilling to enter, feeling that the word “Jacobin” spelled

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something heterodox if not absolutely atheistical. He had no stomach for these smart young men, particularly those emissaries from Paris, who at first seemed personable and genteel enough, but who had lately been succeeded by a crowd of uncouth, obscene, furtive fellows coming in boat-loads from the shore of Provence, a hundred miles to the north. Why his nephew was mixed up with them and their newfangled notions he did not know. The young man's father had made a bad move when he had taken him to France and put him in that military school up at Brienne!

However, the abbé shrugged his shoulders, turning to pleasanter thoughts, as he made his way to the Casa Bonaparte, patting this or that child's head, and lingering to speak for a moment pastorally with some woman in a doorway. The Plaza Letizia had not been cleared, and the Bonaparte house stood at the juncture of two tiny streets, its height leaving the cobbles in constant shadow. Four horsemen abreast in the via Malerbe would have scraped the walls, and the via Pevero was still more narrow. But the house was imposing enough in Ajaccio, with its several wings, its pleasant time-worn stucco walls, and its rows of lofty long-shuttered windows. And, too, it was four stories in height, five with the attic where on his infrequent visits home his nephew Napoleon buried himself in his books. Come to think of it, even as a little fellow, he had always been interested in books—stories of heroes and wars and things, between his playing at soldier and his practical jokes.

Now the abbé was glad of the coolness within, which those spacious windows promised. The day had been hot, and he was, unlike most of his relatives, though active

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enough in his zeal for the church, by nature a rather sedentary fellow.

But no sooner had he entered and passed through the *salotto*—the reception-room—than he heard a high-pitched voice calling from somewhere upstairs:

“Fesch, Fesch, where is that rascal Napoleon?”

Was the boy having the whole household as well as the town by the ears?

Ascending the staircase, the abbé found the owner of the voice bolstered up in a huge four-poster, his lean old face showing a very seine of wrinkles, its once Corsican brown turned to old ivory against the bed-linen. However, the eyes of the archdeacon Lucien, who since the death of Carlo Bonaparte had been the nominal male head of the family, sparkled for the moment as brightly and beadily as ever, while he awaited the news. He was like some old candle of his own altars, burning sturdily almost to the last, but now at the wick’s end beginning to falter, only to flare up in the wind stirred by his grand-nephew, that little Napoleon who as a youngster so often had plagued him.

In a chair by the window sat his niece, the boy’s mother, Signora Letizia Bonaparte, born Ramolino. She had been busied all the morning with household tasks—cleaning, carding flax, sorting linen, and indeed cooking the invalid’s meals herself. In a house of several wings, many rooms, and eight children one could not be idle. Besides, there were only two servants, old Mammucia Caterina, the children’s nurse, and Saveria, whom Joseph, the oldest boy, at his mother’s request, had recently brought from Italy. Saveria’s wage, four francs a month, the

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widow could afford, but not much more, for though they had this big house, a little country retreat at Melleli, and the two old farmsteads inland, there was not much ready money.

She was engaged at the moment in sewing on a pair of breeches for little Jerome, and sat near the bedstead that she might be with the old man, who was a bit restless. She was very fond of him, for he had been just in his way, and kindly enough to her restless brood since her husband's death. True, he had been a little cautious of purse, but that was because he was a careful man, and thought the best way to teach his grandnephews to be provident was not to let them know how many gold pieces he had tucked away under the mattress. Perhaps, too, he thought this the best way to provide for Letizia, who was a "woman of sense," when he was gone, which would be soon. But Letizia was too kind ever to speculate about either the probable time of his taking off or the sum total of his gold pieces.

As for her half-brother Fesch, he also was too amiable to worry, though he was not much like his sister. Indeed an observer would have said that Letizia, had she been a man, would not have cared to be a priest, while the Abbé Fesch was not miscast in that rôle. His broad fat face showed the Swiss blood of his father—her stepfather—and though he was thirteen years her junior and only twenty-seven, his hair was already thinning at the temples and fell benignantly behind in curls over his clerical shoulders. Altogether he was a docile soul and not without parts or a pinch of dry humor. As the third boy, Lucien, named for the old archdeacon—a sharp-tongued rascal, that boy, and himself a youth of parts—had said, "Uncle

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Fesch is sweet—but not like a peach—just like a good sound radish.”

The observer might also have guessed that the widow’s household needed no masculine headship; that it must have been merely nominal, limited to such mellow counsel as a wise old priest could give. For what the old archdeacon actually meant when he called Letizia a “woman of sense” was that she was a remarkable woman.

What struck you first, when she rose to give the invalid his medicine, was a dignity of bearing which, though she could not have been more than of middle size, gave the impression of height, and of that finely tempered steel of which Spartan and pioneer women, the world over, are framed. If fault could be found with the face, it was that it was a trifle too narrow. Still, one never thought twice of that, for the features, which resembled the Greecian, had a firmness and character finer than the mere grace of that type; and were marked with a gravity, not without sweetness, and a noble candor.

Though of patrician descent she had had little schooling, but when she dropped her sewing in her lap, her head had a fine uplift and her arms a grace that no Madame Campan’s finishing-school at St.-Germain could give. Here was a woman, then, fitted for saddle or cradle, for camp or court, though she would not have cared for that—one built for mothering strong sons.

It was of the second of these sons that the archdeacon and his niece had been talking before the arrival of Fesch; and now, as the abbé entered, the old man put the question again to him rather petulantly:

“Fesch, Fesch, you get slower as you get older; come, now what is my nephew up to?”

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“I have no news of him,” the abbé replied, “though I caught a glimpse of his coat-tails disappearing through the doors of the Jacobin Club. Flying coat-tails, flying heels, that seems to be your son, these days, Letizia. Why, the boy jumps like a flea over the whole island!” And he fanned himself with his hat in some irritation, as if his nephew had just led him a merry chase over the mountains.

The old archdeacon had been temperamentally calm enough, except when the boys teased him for money or harried his pet goats; and it was only illness that had acidulated his natural sweetness. Now he answered judicially enough from the bolster:

“You are wrong there, Fesch, in taking him so lightly. When I’m gone Joseph will be head of the family, but Napoleon will head more families than this in the via Malerbe. Who knows, Fesch, but he may give you a cardinal’s hat!”

Letizia smiled. It was not so difficult to think of her son as handing out a cardinal’s hat as it was to picture her amiable half-brother wearing one; but the old voice was going wearily on:

“In a way, though, you are right. I wish he’d stick to his regiment and the career chosen for him instead of mixing in these wretched brawls. He’s a marked man, and some day he’ll rouse the thunder-storm!”

At first Letizia did not join in this dialogue, for she was not given to words, though she could speak her mind on occasion, as the congregation of the Oratorio Giovanni Battista knew well. Its tower could be seen from the window where she sat; and it was there, not many years before, when a misguided priest asked her a question

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which rather shocked her modesty, that her answer had rung through the aisles: "That is a question I do not think proper to answer, sir, and if you persist I shall leave this church." Like mother, like son, it seems, for when by an odd coincidence Napoleon, then with his regiment in France, had been reminded by his confessor of what he owed his sovereign, the boy had replied: "I did not come here to talk about Corsica. It is not a priest's business to catechize me on my duty to the king!"

As for the tactless cleric in Ajaccio, needless to say, the archdeacon had seen to it that he soon left the parish; but the incident was often cited by Letizia's neighbors, by some admiringly as an evidence of fine spirit, by the jealous as a sign of her overweening pride.

Now the words of the archdeacon roused her, and she returned with something of a mother's fears:

"Thunder-storm sounds ominous"; then, more spiritedly, "but it would not be surprising; the Ramolini should unleash at least one thunderbolt."

"With no credit to the Bonapartes, eh?" Fesch retorted, quizzically, yet not as if he wholly disagreed with her.

Here Letizia noticed that the archdeacon looked weary, and she signaled Fesch to silence. And when they rose to leave, she scanned closely the face, that mask of old ivory and netted wrinkles, with the wisps of hair, gray and sulphur-yellow, falling lankly on the bolster. The eyes were closed, but the lips, still moving, repeated prophetically his last word, "thunder-storm."

Letizia had enough of the Corsican's superstition to wonder how much of omen there was in this message from one who lay so close to the gates of Death; and the word

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persisted in her ears as she descended, with the abbé, the stairway to the *salotto*.

It was a pleasant and spacious chamber, cooled and lighted by lofty windows, but rather sparsely if not shabbily furnished—a few good chairs and a sofa of the Louis XV period; a huge chandelier with glass pendants; two large gilt mirrors on the wall; and above the low fireplace, a fading portrait in oil.

It revealed in a strikingly lifelike way a handsome man in a court costume, most bravely embroidered. Superficial charm was there, and possibly self-interest. Each lineament was almost too suavely perfect; and the large beautiful eyes gazed out from the canvas steadily enough, though lacking the forthrightness of the widow's looking up at him. The label bore the inscription, "Carlo Bonaparte, 1746–1785."

"No, Joseph, the boy does not get his masterfulness, if he can be accused of that, from his father, though I loved my husband. A flair for intrigue, perhaps—though I detest the word—but what can you expect from his ancestry? And charm—no, Joseph, you can't deny either the boy or Carlo that, in spite of his wilfulness."

Perhaps, as she studied the portrait, her thoughts went back to her girlhood, when, at fifteen, she had married that handsome man in the tarnished gilt frame above her. And it was amazing, remembering the rigors she had undergone and the thirteen children—eight surviving—that she had borne by the time she was thirty-four, to see how she still retained her youthfulness. The tresses which escaped from the confining head-dress were still nut-brown, the complexion dazzlingly white with just a touch of the peach-blossoms that bloomed in the terrace

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back of the house, where the younger children now played.

“He will be twenty-one in September—no, August. With so many it is hard to remember birthdays; yet it seems but yesterday,” she said, giving voice to the memories the portrait recalled. “You remember—but no, you don’t, for you were only six at the time—but old Caterina could tell you how we went to mass and had barely entered the church when I was seized with the birth-pains and could hardly get home, and as a matter of fact did not reach my bed. So he was born like our Saviour—don’t shake that finger, Fesch; it is not sacrilege, for I have no notion that Napoleon will be any saint, and I’m a very worldly and unworthy woman—but both were born after a journey, without pomp, and neither in a bed; one was laid in the manger, the other on a carpet. How do I make that out? Well, I had been away with Carlo in the hills, when we were driven out by the French, and camped up on the top of Monte Rotondo—though a boy, you recall that. Then I came back, and that morning, when old Mammucia Caterina found me on the sofa there, she laid him on this strip of red carpet, right here at my feet. It’s frayed; but its flowers are almost as bright as when he used to follow them with his chubby finger.

“You think he is too active now; you should have seen him as a child,” she continued as she returned to her sewing for little Jerome. “He was sullen and morose, kindly and winning by turns, sharing his toys, the soul of generosity; you could get anything out of him at times if you only appealed to him. But how he would fight when they enraged him, called him names, or made fun of him or his family! His first love-affair, at six, you remember

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that, with the neighbor's little girl at the school; and the boys used to follow him, jeering at him?"

"I remember," assented Fesch, smiling. "The child's name was Giacometta, and the rime ran something like this:

Napoleone di mezza calzetta
Fa l'amore a Giacometta.

(Napoleon with his stockings half down makes love to Giacometta.)

"Stockings half down." Letizia smiled too. "Yes, he was a funny little urchin. And it doesn't speak well for me or my training. But what would you? In a land where the *vendetta traversale* prevails, and nothing but blood-feuds, with the French on top of that driving us out, a mother had sufficient to do to clothe her children and give them enough to eat, without worrying about looks or suits like those Signora Saliceti imports from Paris. The neighbors call me parsimonious. I had to be. And it's no wonder that Napoleon's disposition is uneasy, with what went before. It's a mercy I didn't bear him in the saddle-skirts, not on that strip of red carpet there. But come, my brother, why are you so worried about the boy? What do people say?"

"I am no more worried about him, Letizia, than you are yourself," returned the abbé. "As for what people say, they but exaggerate what you and I fear."

"And what is that?" looking him straight in the eye.

"That he, like Carlo, is consumed with self-interest, has forgotten Corsica and sold himself to France. Now, mind you, Letizia," he explained, shifting uneasily in his

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chair, "a son of yours is as my own. I but repeat what people say."

"Treachery then," she answered with fire. "The crime is yours to carry the gossip! You know not my son!"

Here she paused, as if, scarce knowing her son but knowing quite fully his father, she herself wondered.

"We do not always get along, he and I—perhaps we are too alike; and sometimes he resents reproof, gentle chiding from me, his mother. Yet he is loving and sensible to principles of honor. And you know how loyal he is to you, Fesch, who criticize him, and to all his family. No, no, there can be nothing wrong there!"

So, having reaffirmed her faith, she went rapidly on with that native eloquence all Corsicans have on occasion.

"I admit he has self-interest, but what young man has not who wants to rise? Still, duty and ambition often lie up the same road. He loves Corsica passionately, but sees for her security under France. The king is bound to fall, the Revolution to win control. On that I know he counts. And despite his moods, his dreams, he is a practical man—no visionary like Pasquale Paoli nor a zealot like you; for you are that, my dear brother, under all your outward placidity."

"Practical! How practical?" the abbé asked with unwonted heat. "No, I do not mean to hurt; but what does it all amount to? He forms a Jacobin club, it is closed; a National Guard, it is dispersed; tries to get himself elected adjutant-major, to seize the citadel, is almost killed. No, everything your son, this cocksure little lieutenant, touches ends in failure. If he were wise like Joseph now, or had the boy Lucien's eloquence—"

"Did you ever stop to think, my dear brother, that he

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opened that club of his again; also that while we all prophesy great things for Joseph and Lucien, it is about Napoleon that we, like the townspeople, are always talking? And here we are at it again!"

With this she paused in her work and went to the window that gave on a terrace behind the house, with a few almond, mulberry, peach, and citron trees, and one giant chestnut. Joseph, Napoleon, Lucien, were somewhere about the island, and Marianne Elisa away at school at St.-Cyr; but here Pauline and Caroline, with Louis and little Jerome, were playing quite near a summer-house made of rude boards. It had been built several years before by the Napoleon they were discussing, when the weather was too hot for the coop in the attic, "to get away," as he said, "from all the noise." Studying, studying always—that rude little structure was significant, she thought.

"Do you know," she said, as she returned to her sewing, "I had a dream last night. He was a baby again, playing with those faded red flowers on the carpet here; then a boy mounted on a hobby-horse. Suddenly he grew into a man, and the hobby-horse turned into a charger, while the carpet became a blood-red sky. Then he rode across the sky, high in the heaven, all his brothers and sisters in his train. Then, when he reached the zenith, he looked down from the trail of glory—and smiled at me as I lay in my bed as if to say, 'Will you believe in me now, Signora Mother?'"

"Pshaw!" said the abbé, returning to his salty humor again, as the sounds of childish bickerings arose from the yard. "They'd all quarrel before they were half-way up. Joseph would be advising Napoleon which way to ride,

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Lucien in the sulks, and Pauline pulling Marianne's hair. Besides, Letizia, pride goeth—”

“Before a fall,” she finished for him. “I know it; but for a man it is better to ride high and fall than never to mount at all.”

Still, she disliked the dream, and distrusted it; preferring honor rather than glory for her sons. And as for what the abbé said, it seemed quite true. The little strippling appeared absurd enough—not when he looked you straight in the face, but when you were away from him and talking about him.

CHAPTER II

They Stone Napoleon

LETIZIA'S fancies were now dispelled by the sound of an affray from a near-by street. Deliberately, because she was herself controlled and such affairs were common in Ajaccio, she crossed to a southwest window, which gave a view of the corner from which the noise of the fracas arose.

Below, she saw the children clambering over the garden wall and up into the chestnut for a nearer view, but could herself make out only the fragment of a passing procession—cowled priests and ragged followers of Paoli—with the Corsican colors. The column had halted, and the marchers were jeering some one on the sidewalk whose figure was hidden by the garden wall of the adjacent house and its overhanging fruit-trees. A stone crashed through a window of the neighboring house, followed by another that almost reached the branches of the chestnut-tree to which the Bonaparte children clung—Louis on the highest branch, as became his bold spirit, the slightly younger Pauline and Caroline on safer perches below, while little Jerome picked up some half-ripe burrs that had fallen to the ground. For some reason the clamor now ceased; Letizia could see the tip of the standard move through the trees, and the procession passed on.

And now three visitors were coming across the court-

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yard—a young man of graceful carriage, a young woman, and an older one, the first two well poised, the third excited and gesticulating, apparently over the disturbance Signora Bonaparte had just witnessed. She went to the door to be ready to greet the guests, when the children rushed in pell-mell, ahead of them, eager to tell of what they had seen. They were reprimanded by their mother, who, after greeting the new-comers, turned, with an apology, to quiet Pauline, a pretty child but a little more excitable than the others. She was much attached to her brother Napoleon and was crying:

“They stoned Napoleon and hurt him. He had blood on his forehead!”

Here the oldest of the visitors, a Signora Saliceti, volubly broke in:

“It is true, Signora Bonaparte; two stones actually fell in our carriage. I myself was almost killed. It was your son Napoleon who is always stirring things up. Charles here,” indicating the young man beside her, “would have flown to his rescue, had I not held him by the arm. But, Charles, you tell it; my heart is beating too terribly. Have you, Letizia, any sal volatile?”

Despatching Pauline for the restorative, Letizia turned to the young man, whom she did not criticize for any failure to aid her son, knowing what he had on his hands in the excited woman before her; but already he was reassuring his hostess, though it occurred to him that here was a woman who needed support about as little as any woman he had ever seen.

“Do not be alarmed, signora,” he said. “Napoleon settled them—as usual,” he added smilingly; then, seeing that his excitable aunt was a little more composed, con-

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tinued: "Joseph was there, but it was Napoleon they aimed at. The procession was marching by, clerics, sympathizers with Paoli, and the customary rag-tag rabble, and Napoleon stopped to watch it, with that half-amused expression of his, when the tail end of the crowd, the rabble again, signora, took it into their heads to jeer at him—called him 'traitor,' 'lover of the French,' and all that."

At this confirmation of all that he had been saying, Fesch glanced at Letizia significantly; but again the excitable Saliceti broke in.

"It's Napoleon's fault, Letizia. Your son should have nothing to do with those low-born Jacobins!"

For all her poise, Letizia could scarcely suppress a smile, the caller's face shone so scarlet under the latest importation from Paris, one of those gorgeous creations called a *chapeau à la belle poule*. The main part of the hat was bateau-shaped, in color apple-green sprinkled with silver dots; and surmounting it were three sky-blue ribbons shaped like pleated Chinese junk sails, with a wisteria-hued velvet bow at the stern and pink ribbons, like banners, floating out from here and there. It had the effect of a gaily colored galleon under full sail on the excited lady's high-built coiffure—a galleon, be it said, tilted a bit off its keel by the late excitement. This, Madame Saliceti—she preferred the French title—discovered to her consternation and was reassembling it before the large mirror.

Letizia, however, turned from the spectacle to ask:

"And Napoleon, was he seriously wounded?"

"No, madame; a large stone struck him in the forehead—a deep gash, but he did not fall."

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“And Joseph?”

“He took it like a man,” returned the youthful visitor. “But if I may venture it, signora, I think Joseph was steeled by his younger brother. For though it is past, they were in real danger of being killed; and Napoleon was like a rock—a rock with the eyes of a falcon,” the young man added, mixing his metaphors enthusiastically. “It was his demeanor that quelled them.”

Letizia, accustomed to bloodshed, was not perturbed by the accident itself—only perhaps for what it portended; and she turned to the other guests, Madame Saliceti and her protégée, Mademoiselle de Launey. She was a tall girl of fine carriage and very evident breeding, with dark eyes finely set and inclined to serious mood, partly by nature, partly because of certain vivid memories of July, '89, in Paris. Her father, an officer of the Guard, had fallen in the sack of the Bastile.

The voluble Saliceti had now recovered sufficiently to address herself to the Abbé Fesch with many commiserations on the unhappy state of affairs on the island.

“I declare dreadful things will happen here in Ajaccio!” she exclaimed. “Why, they’re happening every day! Soon Corsica will be unfit to live in. For myself I plan to emigrate to France.”

“But where, my dear signora?” returned the abbé. “To Toulon, Marseilles, Nice? The frying-pan into the fire! The Revolution is quiet for the moment; but it will break forth soon in more blood.”

“Oh,” said the lady, “that cannot be! The French are too polite, too refined. What do you think, Madame Bonaparte?”

Letizia turned.

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“My place is here with my people,” she answered firmly, “until we are driven out.”

“Bravo, mother!” said a voice from the doorway, and two young men entered and bowed respectfully to Letizia and their guests.

The elder, Joseph, was twenty-three, with the large head that was apt to characterize the Bonapartes, fine features which showed some intellectual power, also a little indolence, especially in the heavy-lidded eyes.

The speaker, Lucien, then seventeen, and slighter in line of head and body than his brother, was much more vivid, though darker in coloring. He was a little near-sighted; but in his profile, swarthy and incisive, one might have found the counterpart to the head on some fine old coin.

Since he was the orator of the family and had often been told he talked well, he, not Joseph, plunged into a description of the affray.

“Just rabble, followers of Paoli, and some foolish priests—your pardon, uncle”—this, catching the eye of Fesch. “But they’re vexed at the new Civil Constitution taking away some of their vested rights. It is equitable too,” he declared with all the arrogance of youth. “Church and state should be separate for the common good.”

The usually good-natured abbé caught him up.

“With their separation follows anarchy!” he indignantly exclaimed.

Both to plague his uncle and to seize the opportunity for more eloquence, the youth was staging another forensic display, when Letizia interfered.

“Lucien!” was all she said; and brave as the young

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man might elsewhere show himself, that "Lucien" was enough.

"Pardon, mother," he said with a smile. "I did not mean to plague dear Uncle Fesch, but times are changing. In the new order, the Revolution, lies our only hope."

"What hope, monsieur?" the young woman, Mademoiselle de Launey, asked, in a voice piercingly sweet. "I have seen your Revolution at work, messieurs; men slaughtered—the innocent; unspeakable things done to their bodies; my father's head carried on a pike!"

Lucien bowed and was about to utter some apology when his mother spoke rapidly in Italian, which the girl could scarcely understand. "You see, Lucien, your impetuosity has hurt. Go find Napoleon. Tell him I wish to see him before he leaves."

"I cannot, signora, for already he is off somewhere inland."

Then, taking the opportunity, he made his escape upstairs, carrying off Joseph with him, while Letizia rang the bell-rope for old Mammucia Caterina.

When the wine, a thin sour wine from their own vineyards at Melleli, was served, Letizia turned to talk with the young Frenchman, Charles de Revillé, scion of an old Touraine family, whom Madame Saliceti had appropriated during his stay in Corsica, as she did all things French. Letizia liked the young man both for his manner and his defense of Napoleon, for that was a refreshing experience just now, when everybody was attacking him; and, though a woman of strong reticences, mother-like, she tried to draw her caller out.

"You do not like our Corsica?" she hazarded, by way of indirection, as she took a seat by his side.

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“On the contrary I do, signora—like her and sympathize.”

“Also with my son, I think, from what you said. You know him well?”

“For the past year only. It is a great honor,” he added.

“You mean, signor?”

“That he is going far.”

“Would you say on the right road? But that is a strange question for a mother to ask; and we Corsican mothers are proud. But somehow you have the air of a father confessor. Forgive me, signor; I do not jest. I mean you have great poise for one so young.”

“I shall be twenty-one in October, signora.”

“You are almost of an age then. Napoleon’s birthday is in August. But you haven’t yet answered my question.”

“Which, madame?”

“Does he follow the right road?”

“That is a hard one to answer, signora, for one of my youth. I see many roads and, like the English poet’s Hamlet, am sometimes of more than one mind. As for the Revolution”—here he lowered his voice so that Mademoiselle de Launey should not hear—“no limb can be amputated without some blood-letting.”

“So speaks my son. As for myself, I am a very selfish woman, caring only for my family and for Corsica,” she declared, to add thoughtfully, after a pause: “I have watched him as only a mother can—in childhood winning and sweet, though sometimes hard to manage; then, a few years back, ever studying but absorbed in his dreams—*what* dreams, signor! And now a change has come over him—not merely that of arrival at manhood, I mean.

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He is firmer, and yet in spite of his firmness unsettled still. I know all you young men are that until you find yourselves—yet—” Here she broke off suddenly. “At any rate, I am glad that you are not one of those that criticize.”

“I cannot criticize, signora,” he answered, “since, however I might differ with him on any one course, I think all his instincts are right.”

“If he only trusts them,” he was about to add, but finished instead, “And I have seen his mother!”

“Thank you, signor—for my son.” And with this she went over to her other guests, who now rose to go.

As she descended to the linen-room, she pondered this conversation, by which she had been deeply impressed. In Ajaccio, yes, in all Corsica, every man’s hand might be against the boy, but here at least was one—he seemed a thoughtful and superior young man too—who had been held by some quality in her son. Again she recalled the dream, and in a flash she saw it all; there would be others, countless others who would yield to that spell. Then she shook her head, as if disturbed, and, like all practical women with duties ahead, she put these distracting thoughts from her mind.

“Did you ever see such a household?” gossiped the voluble Saliceti, as her carriage jolted over the cobbles. “And her dress, when every one knows the high-waisted gown is the only thing!” Here she glanced down at her own, quite in the Parisian mode; remembered, too, the galleon that rode so triumphantly on her head. “And those shabby old chairs, and that thin, sour wine—ugh!”

“I thought she was very kind,” interrupted her niece.

“I know; but she’s so—well, let us call it careful. All the

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Bonapartes are," the lady asserted with a nod of conviction.

"Perhaps, in these days, a widow with a large family has to be," remarked Charles.

"But not like that! And that old archdeacon positively hoards it. You should have seen how angry he was when the children got that madcap Pauline to pull his purse from under his bolster and scattered all the gold pieces over the floor. The old man's rage was scarcely clerical, I assure you—no, of course, I wasn't there, but I heard all about it. Take it all in all, the Bonapartes are a very badly brought up family!"

CHAPTER III

Napoleon Offers to Look Out for Louis

THOUGH Letizia waited up until all hours for several nights, her son did not come home. It was about midnight of the fourth day after the call of the Salicetis that she heard a knock at the door, roused herself from her doze, and hurried downstairs.

At one side of the entrance was a small iron grille provided for the inspection of visitors in these days of feuds; and through this she saw a ragged fellow, one of the *paesani* from the hills, cap in hand. In the other was a letter. "For the signora," he said.

She was disappointed, for she had expected Napoleon. Still, he might have sent a letter; and she hurried back for some coppers, paid the fellow, then by the feeble light of the candle tried to decipher the message. It was difficult, for her son's script was as nervously characteristic as his stride.

She managed to make out at last, however, that he had been blocked in some of his wild schemes for seizure of the citadel from the royalists; also that old General Paoli, her husband's old friend, who had so often been entertained under their roof, had actually sent out orders for the arrest of the boy. That was what came of siding with the French, conscientious as his reasons might be.

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And there was further trouble—for Napoleon's never came singly or by twos—he was threatened with arrest by the Revolutionary government of Paris for having overstayed his furlough. That, she reflected, was quite as characteristic as his handwriting or step. He had done it before. Truly the boy was a law unto himself. But the upshot was that he could not come home.

Still, he had sent her many kisses and much love and had added a postscript about Louis. Would Joseph not bring the little fellow to the *quai* at dawn? He would take him to France—he would be safe in garrison with him—and he would educate him and look out for him. And there were such excellent opportunities now in France!

The widow did not think so much of those chances. A boy of thirteen plunged in an unsettled country under the guidance of a restless lieutenant of twenty-one! The prospects were no brighter than the flame of that candle. Still, Louis must have a career; and their circumstances were now so straitened! She sighed and ascended the stairs to summon the family to a council over “another plan of Napoleon's,” sending Lucien for the abbé, who lived a few streets away.

They met, clad in dressing-gowns around the bedside of the old archdeacon, whose sleep was now so light that he was easily aroused.

The boys, almost as ambitious as their vigorous brother, and the abbé applauded the scheme as a partial settlement of their difficulties. But it was left to the old invalid, as the feudal head of the family, to give his consent.

What this answer would be Letizia knew, as she read the letter aloud, groping through the scrawled phrases,

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for he had tapped his fingers together feebly in his satisfied way.

When she had finished he nodded his head. *Aie!* His nephew who was jumping like a flea over the island had at last offered something useful. "Let the boy go," he said.

It was long past midnight when the council broke up, and she packed the few clothes of Louis, not with tears, for she seldom shed tears, but with a tug at her heart. Louis was growing so big now, and she wished she had had time to let his suit out. Then she went with them down to the *quai*, hugging closely the shadows of house and cathedral wall so that they might not follow her and apprehend Napoleon.

His face she could scarcely see, only the eyes burning out of the darkness. And he was so impatient to be off, though he embraced her affectionately enough. Louis too, somewhat awed by the summons at night and the prospect of the voyage, scarcely brushed her cheek. There was just this hurried farewell by the faint glimmer of the stars; she watched the boat row out to the felucca anchored off the Mole, the little figure climb up; the one scarcely larger follow with the boy's bundle and the portmanteau, the sails go up. Then with a sigh she walked home through streets now slowly growing astir. . . . It would be a long time, she thought, before she saw them again. Life was so full of partings.

Youthful adventurers, however, with all life before them do not brood over partings, and within a few days they had happily, if somewhat uncomfortably, settled down to garrison life at Auxonne in the marshes.

Rather shabby were these quarters, in a den under

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the mansard roof of a lodging kept by a barber who lathered and shaved, also bled people, on the ground floor below. A small bed of uneven legs, uncurtained, two upholstered chairs momentarily threatened with disembowelment, a table by a window in the embrasure of the roof, were the only furnishings; and in the wall ran fissures like the rivers and boundary lines of the maps unrolled on the table. On hooks in the wall hung the military dress-coat, small-clothes, and sword of the young officer. These, the one extra pair of boots on the floor, and the papers and text-books were neatly arranged despite the unfavorable appearance of the room itself; so also the few belongings of Louis, who slept in a little closet off the main chamber.

Could they have observed him on one of these spring mornings, the practicality of Napoleon's duties might have confounded those back in Ajaccio who complained of the indirection of his activities. The week before, he had completed the last draft of the manuscript of his "History of Corsica," by which he at the time set much store. Working long past midnight, he had, too, finished correcting the proofs; that day had risen at dawn; walked to Dole and back, a distance of twenty miles, to hand the sheets to his printer; and now at noon sat with his brother before a meal of haricots, a long twisted loaf, and a bottle of thin sour wine, planning out the rest of the day's routine. There were lessons to be given to Louis; his own in military science and mathematics; regimental drills on the parade-ground; that memorial he intended to write to the authorities in Paris, urging more democratic customs among the officers of the garrisons; and, finally, a call at Madame Maret's. She was the wife of a fat wine-

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merchant, it was true; but she kept what in Auxonne most nearly resembled a *salon*. The mayor was to be there, and other dignitaries; there would be talk of politics; and one might sharpen one's intellect, whet the disputatious powers, and also—for the young subaltern felt a little ill at ease in a drawing-room—improve one's social bearing.

In short, there were many things to do, and he resented the continued presence of his landlady, the barber's wife, who, under pretext of attending to little Louis's clothes, chattered coquettishly; and now and then, as she passed his way, touched Napoleon's shoulder with the semblance of a caress.

The picture amused two companion officers looking in at the door. They had climbed the stairs, also under a pretext, that of conveying to their comrade an invitation to dine, which they knew from past experience he would not accept. But they had observed the landlady coming out of the barber-shop with the smoking dish of haricots; noted also her cherry-ripe charms; and had followed her, expecting to be able to twit Napoleon about developments afterward. His indifference, however, to her attentions, and his offishness, when they presented their invitation, nettled them, and they withdrew to sample the charms of the barber's wife, who, in the passageway, found them more responsive than the young subaltern upstairs. He, *tiens*, had ice or iron, not blood in his veins!

“A queer fellow!” said one of the cavaliers, after they had left her.

“Both queer and *gauche*,” returned the other, flicking a few brown grains of snuff from his coat; “in fact, im-

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possible. Why, he's a paradox—a St. Anthony in shoulder-straps, a virgin in jack-boots!"

Possibly the two cavaliers did their young comrade an injustice; perhaps he was not quite so oblivious to feminine charms as on the surface appeared. But then it takes courage and eternal vigilance to model one's conduct after Plutarch's men; and this, from the age of twelve, the stern young soldier had tried to do.

Even at the *soirée* at the wine-merchant's, later that evening, he did not come off handily or add to his list of friends. His quarterly three hundred francs did not admit of a tailor, and it was only after a careful inventory of his scanty wardrobe, a most vigorous polishing of boots, that he assembled a costume that would pass. But he forgot his appearance in the dispute that followed immediately on his entrance. Quite naturally the talk had veered to Paris and the Revolution, still marking time; and at once, to the consternation of the more conservative guests, this interloper whom they had so charitably admitted to their circle, this shabby alien in the uniform of France, advanced arguments in defense of the Jacobins—arguments, be it said, which he himself only half believed.

For Liberty to him was still a magic word, and it was hard to reconcile *Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité* with a gospel of violence and with deeds that were worse. He could not wholly forget the Rousseau he had worshiped at school, the austere delight in being one of Plutarch's men, the dreams of liberating one's country, bringing freedom to oppressed peoples—all the generous sentiments that had occupied his teens. Only—the beautiful theory of these principles could not so easily be put in

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practice. He was beginning to suspect that the gracious figure of Liberty should go pretty well armed; that capricious man needed masters to dole out his freedom; that perhaps, fine as was the waving of tricolor and slogan, equally necessary was the iron heel.

All this, though, to himself. To the guests he declared, with a vehemence startling in one of his youth but quite in accord with his piercing eyes, his lanky locks, and his thin, eager, and sallow face, that true patriotism longed for a *united* France; and France could not unite under the weak, the palaverers; only under the strong. And who were the strong? The Feuillants, the Constitutionalists—no, the Jacobins, of course. Therefore their gospel of violence, even their impiety, must be condoned. Under them warring factions could be welded, foreign foes repelled. In short, stern logic demanded that all who loved their country should range themselves on the Jacobin side.

In this bold onslaught the young officer was outnumbered by the Auxonne bourgeoisie, twenty to one. He would, as always, have stuck to his guns, but in spite of his coolness in camp and under fire, drawing-rooms, French customs, and audiences of women irked him, while attracting him, too—since they might prove useful to a man bound to rise, and he was unwilling in anything to admit defeat. And now that he had shot off his fusillade, the social aspect of the occasion suddenly recurred to him. In place of stern Jacobins he saw only the red roses of the fat wine-merchant's carpet, the gilt and Pompeian red of his chairs, and in them the mayor, so flushed with choler his face seemed the reflection of his crimson coat, a long-nosed *commissaire* in swallow-blue, and an array of petticoats and redoubtable head-dresses

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all excitedly trembling, some in bitter, others in more arch disapproval of his speech. He showed no outward sign of confusion, still confronted the circle with hawk-like glance and an alert erectness, a little forward on his toes. To Madame Maret this ruffling young alien in a foreign parlor was a quaint and pathetic figure and one she fancied more than any gossip of the far-off capital. But he himself was conscious only of awkwardness, an ill fitting coat; knew, too, it was only her tact that now saved him from appearing decidedly *maladroit*.

So, chafing at the superior financial position of folk he felt to be inferior, he returned to his lodgings. There was nothing here to reassure him. The first object that met his eyes was the bundle of proofs of his "History of Corsica." And these he had been forced to bring back from Dole that morning, for Monsieur Joly the bookseller had refused to print them. There had been political reasons, of course. And old Joly, timid man, had the heart of a hare!

Nor was Napoleon's mood improved by the reflection that General Paoli, to whom he had sent a first draft, had lost the manuscript, which praised him highly, and later treated the loss as of no consequence. History, said the general, in his letter, was not written by a callow youth.

All this had occurred the year before; since then Paoli, who had fought so long against the French, had accepted the governorship of the island under them—evidently with winking eye. For after watching Napoleon's activities in Ajaccio, the general had declared him too little Corsican and too much pro-French; had even threatened him with arrest.

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But this slight to his manuscript was worse than any threat. He was miffed at his old leader. Even hero-worship cannot survive such contempt.

Nevertheless, after covering the sleeping Louis to protect the boy from the malarial air, he repaired to the table in the embrasure, where he fortified himself with a chapter from his beloved Plutarch, another from Arrianus, and a passage on ordnance. Then he attacked with unabated zeal his memorial on garrison customs, to wind up, as the candle flickered low in the drafts from the fens, with letters to Corsica, filled with descriptions in detail of his curious activities and admonitions to each of the family.

When these letters, relayed by packet from Provence, reached the Bonaparte house, they were received, like most of Napoleon's correspondence, with conflicting emotions.

Lucien had been sitting, the day of their arrival, in the afternoon sunlight, explaining sundry matters to the arch-deacon, who lay testily questioning him from the four-poster. These questions were difficult to answer, for the boy had wheedled out of the invalid some of those cherished gold pieces for a trip to Bastia; whither he had promptly gone to talk the French authorities into some preferment for himself. Though he was proud of his persuasive powers and had been abetted in this pride, ever since he had been ten, by the compliments of his elders, the trip had been futile; almost as unsuccessful, in fact, as the ventures of Napoleon which he had so harshly criticized.

Never once during this painful cross-examination did Lucien lose his address, which was rather impressive;

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still, though mature, he was only seventeen. So he sat there, decidedly out of sorts, and moping over the family fortunes, as he listened to the old man's tart advice with all the hurt sensitiveness of youth.

Joseph had been at the post-office. When he entered, Lucien looked up.

“Any news from Paoli?” he asked eagerly.

The older of the two brothers sat down before replying. Only twenty-three at the time, he had acquired much of that caution which the archdeacon could have wished in the other boys.

“Yes,” he replied after a moment, “but no good news. I have interviewed the general, and he refuses, with many words, to make you his secretary.”

“For what reason?” Lucien asked explosively. “Does he think I’m not capable?”

Here the old man broke in in his high-pitched quavering voice.

“I can tell you. It is because, as Napoleon says, your talk is too wild. You go off half cocked. You both go off half cocked!”

Then he relapsed into silence.

“It cannot be helped,” replied Joseph, ignoring the interruption; “but something must be done. Our indebtedness is mounting”—this with a vigilant eye on the archdeacon, who made no move for the purse under his bolster. “However,” the older brother continued, “I have some promise of support for an appointment myself—to the Western Department. And Napoleon has sent us two hundred francs of his back pay. That, with the sale of more sheep at Bocognano, will see us through till January. There is a letter, also, for you and one for the signora.”

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Lucien's "What! News from the wanderer! Is he adjutant-major yet?" was scarcely whole-hearted; but at this moment Letizia entered to restore calm. She had been attending to the disposal of some stores in the buttery, particularly the family's favorite *broccio* cheeses, brought by a carter from the Bocognano farm.

"Yours first, Joseph," she said—"aloud, please," indicating the face on the bolster, which now lay back wearily with closed eyes.

"As you wish, mother; but it is a strange compound of sense and nonsense," Joseph replied, then read rapidly through the items of revolutionary and garrison gossip until he came to the "nonsense" to which he had referred. The offending paragraphs concerned ambition and any man who might cherish it.

"Does he feel the fire of genius?" the writer declaimed. "If so, I pity him! He will be the wonder of those who feel as he does, but the most miserable of them all.—Ah! that fire of genius!"

"But let us not take it too much to heart," was now interjected with a naïveté unbelievable in so level-headed a lieutenant. "Men of genius are like meteors destined to burn in order to illumine the century in which they live."

These forensic passages aroused the invalid in a way unforeseen by Letizia.

"Burn, burn!" the voice rose in a troubled quaver. "The boy is mad. We'll all burn with him. They'll have the house down about our heads. Letizia, why don't you make him stick to his drills and his books?"

Lucien, who had been listening with half an ear, at the same time reading his own letter, suddenly turned over a

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sheet to reread a passage, a flush, meanwhile, spreading over his handsome Greek-coin face."

"Admirable sentiments, but always the preceptor!" he exclaimed angrily. "Listen to this, Signora Mother: 'I advise you to exercise self-restraint in everything. In everything, mind you, if you wish to lead a happy life.'

"And then, as if that were not plain enough, my dear brother says, 'Do not let yourself be entangled in anything!'"

The irritated Lucien could not of course guess that both these letters, written by candle-light in the drafts from the malarial marshes, were really injunctions hurled at the writer himself, with the twin inspirations: a fat wine-merchant's wife and the cherry-ripe spouse of a barber. So Lucien stormed on resentfully:

"First he tells Fesch what price to get for his sheep. Then he writes that Joseph will not make a good soldier; and at Napoleon's demand you try to make Joseph into a priest. And now he reads me a lecture on conduct!"

Letizia interrupted this tirade.

"If the shoe fits, my son—" Then more placatingly: "But can you not see that the admonition is addressed as much to himself as to you? Besides, when you criticize, remember he is sending us two hundred francs of his pay and also taking care of Louis."

Lucien was not without generous sentiments, and he looked a little ashamed, as Letizia rapidly scanned her own letter, hoping perhaps for the tender things an absent son might write to his mother, though, being of Spartan fiber herself and little given to expressions of sentiment, she did not expect them.

"Now hear *this*," she said at last, brightening. "It is

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about Louis, and a great relief," she added, turning to the invalid; "for you know how I hesitated about letting him go.

" 'He'—Louis, he means—is getting on capitally with his work and is learning to write French; I myself am helping him with mathematics and geography; he is reading history and is altogether becoming a great fellow.

"All the ladies here are losing their hearts to him. He has acquired a French style, light and bright.' "

Here Letizia, who, though a noble-minded woman, had her prejudices, paused to interject, "I hope they don't make him *too* French," then went on:

" 'He is going out into society; he carries himself well and uses all the customary passwords with the gravity and unction of a man of thirty years. I see already that Louis will be the best of the four of us.' "

With one ear she had meantime caught sounds of a scuffle outside the door. In the strict discipline of the household, the younger members were allowed neither at family councils nor to hear letters until they had been censored by their elders. And Letizia had suspected from a sibilant whispering that Pauline and Caroline had been listening at the key-hole. She was sure of it when she heard the older girl passionately defend her beloved Napoleon.

"He says Louis is the best of them. It isn't so. Louis is conceited. He'll turn out nothing but one of those la-di-da Frenchmen."

Caroline's answer came back in tones precociously heartless and cold for her ten years:

"Napoleon's scrawny. Louis is far more handsome. He would look adorable in a uniform."

Napoleon Offers to Look Out for Louis

To which Pauline retorted: "Napoleon will be a great hero. You see!" And there followed the usual hair-pulling match enlivened by the vituperations of old Mammucia Caterina, who, in trying to separate the combatants, had her ears roundly boxed. Letizia was now forced to interfere, with threats of chastisement which they all knew would, later, surely be carried out.

"Do you remember," laughed Lucien, "how, when we were little, father would try to beg us off and she would say: 'Let them alone. It is not your business; it is mine. I will attend to them'? *Tiens!* she chastised Napoleon when he was seventeen, and he had the good grace or sense not to protest. An excellent and affectionate but very stern mother," he whimsically concluded, "and at forty-one still as graceful as a young girl!"

Joseph, still thinking of ways and means, absent-mindedly assented, as Lucien placed his arm around the waist of his mother, who stood on the threshold. Together they heard the old man murmuring from his bolster, in a cavernous chuckle:

"Two hundred francs. The rascal!"

Letizia smoothed the pillow and motioned to the others to leave, then hovered over the bedside, watching him anxiously.

It had been a hard summer for her, trying to make ends meet, worrying over the absent ones, and caring for the invalid. To some his death would have meant merely the passing of an old, old man, an encumbrance who long ago should have been laid to molder in the earth. But she was very fond of him, and in a household still under the feudal influence his going meant a profound change. He

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had always been a balance-wheel, and on what would happen when her ambitious boys took control she did not dare to think.

The old man was to unburden himself only once more about Napoleon. Through the long summer months he failed visibly in spite of care, and the day came when Letizia had to write for her son. At least, she thought, it would bring him home. But she had allowed scant time, and when Napoleon, having wheedled another of those endless furloughs out of a chaotic War Department, and leaving Louis in the care of his landlady, returned home, he found the others at the bedside assembled, with the exception of Marianne, who was still at school in St.-Cyr.

All day the house had been hushed, and in the late afternoon they had stolen up, one by one, at Letizia's summons. The physician sat by the bed with his hand on the flickering pulse. Napoleon, the salt-spray still fresh upon him, took his place on the opposite side with Joseph and Lucien; and there, ranked in the order of their ages, they stood, looking gravely down while the children, Pauline, Caroline, and little Jerome, clustered in the corner, awed by that presence in the air so vaguely and faintly felt, which in its time must approach and pass over every threshold.

With her fine sense of practicality, Letizia had not been idle. Constantly she had attended the invalid and now had gone to the window to signal the heedless Mammucia below to cease her altercations with an itinerant cart-driver.

At last the form on the bedside, which for hours had not stirred, opened its eyes. That morning the last rites had been administered, the lips touched with the sacred wine;

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yet still Fesch hovered near, putting to the dying man further questions about the state of his soul. But the archdeacon, for the last time growing querulous, begged him to desist.

“I have but a few moments to live; let me give them to my family.”

Then to each he gave his final admonition, administered his blessing, sank on the bolster, and closed his eyes.

The sunlight, sifting through the leaves of the mulberry-trees, fell on the austere crucifix, the sacred pictures; and rippled on the bed, like a stream of palest gold, dappled with the shadow of the dancing foliage . . . it seemed so like the River of Time, flowing over the white wisps of hair, the old ivory of the face, drowning it, submerging it, though very peacefully. The contrast between the mortality there evident and the fresh young faces of the round-eyed children, the strong young men gazing down, was startling. He was so far removed from wars and the rumors of war. Then from out of that river in which they were submerged, the lips moved in a scarcely audible whisper:

“*Tu poi, Napoleone, sarai un omone!*”

“What’s that?” asked Lucien sharply.

Letizia only had caught the words, and her look of inquiry at her son was quite as sharp, as she softly repeated them:

“Thou, Napoleon, wilt be a marked man!”

But the archdeacon had passed forever up that river.

The old shell itself they laid, three days thereafter, by the blue waters of the Gulf.

CHAPTER IV

He Kidnaps a Deputy

AS is usual in small towns like Ajaccio, there was much gossip of the changes wrought in the Bonaparte fortunes by the death of the archdeacon. Not only was Joseph now nominally the head of the household, with Napoleon actually its leader, but the old man had left a little property in addition to those gold pieces. Madame Saliceti undertook to advise Letizia about refurnishing the house and about sundry new gowns from Paris. When the signora, who sincerely mourned the old man, drew aloof at these suggestions, her caller was affronted by this fresh evidence of the Ramolino pride. Other of the neighbors, however, hoped that "the will would make things a little easier for Letizia." That it did not was perhaps scarcely to be wondered at; but the way the money "was actually squandered" was unexpected of "the careful Bonapartes."

The decision to cast the gold pieces like bread on the waters came, some ten days before Easter, at a council of the brothers.

Joseph, wise administrator, sat at table in the dining-room, poring over his ledger. It was neatly ruled and inscribed. Wages at a livre a day for sheep-shearers, bills for plows for the farm, school-books for Marianne, a black broadcloth coat, stuccoing the house—such were the

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entries. Joseph had on now the new swallowtail, which he wore with the air of a diplomat, as was fitting, since Napoleon had recently clinched for him the appointment to the Western Department.

On the opposite side sat Lucien, much disgruntled because he had to follow the others' lead, though admitted to their conclaves, and eagerly awaiting the chance to clothe in fine words the abstract political ideas which were sure to arise in the discussion. At this trick he was amazingly clever.

Even more abstemious than his brothers, Napoleon scarcely touched the light Furiani wine on the table, but spent his time maturing a certain plan, as he paced up and down before the fireplace. His tangled locks of hair fell around features almost as thin and jaundiced as two years before; the lieutenant's uniform looked worn, the rather too large top-boots lusterless, and the epaulets faded. But there was no lack of flash or luster in the eyes, dark blue, somber, and yet piercing.

"The archdeacon's money is a godsend," said Joseph, scratching with his quill. "But it will take all the signora's share to strike any sort of balance."

"Let the debts wait," said Napoleon. "I have another use for that money."

He stopped his pacing to explain, as Joseph looked up in astonishment:

"Next week the National Guard is to elect officers. I will run for lieutenant-colonel. I need votes, so we will collect all the recruits we can from the outlying districts. The money will be needed for entertaining; but the increase in pay will more than make up for the expenditure."

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“But how can you be elected in the Guard when already you are enrolled with the regulars?” asked Joseph.

Napoleon waved the query aside.

“The War Department will consent to a transfer.”

Here Lucien interposed.

“Already you have overstayed your furlough a third time. If you go to Paris, you’ll be cashiered.”

“Save your wind for the rostrum, Lucien,” retorted Napoleon. “You are a visionary. Trust us for practical measures. As for the transfer—in its present state, the French army needs trained officers too much not to overlook my absence.”

It all seemed absurd enough, this defiance of the might of France by a lieutenant, but the way he said it was almost convincing. Still, Joseph had a reserve.

“You are aware that we are hardly popular in Ajaccio, you—”

Napoleon took the words out of his mouth.

“I least of all, you would say. Granted—and for what reasons? Because I look ahead and see little Corsica secure only under a stronger wing. No, Lucien, do not interrupt! This is your field, but your turn will come later.”

And again Lucien subsided, looking as if he could have suggested other reasons for his brother’s unpopularity.

“Young Peraldi, our neighbor,” Napoleon continued, “also wants this lieutenant-colonelcy. I admit he is better liked—therefore the plan, in which you are to help:

“First you are to go into the outlying districts, enlist all the new recruits you can in the Guard, and, with the old ones you can collect, bring them into the city, putting

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them up with such friends as we have. Forty we can quarter here, thirty with Uncle Fesch, and a dozen more at Cousin Ramolino's.

“Second, since there are judges who will preside at the elections, Quenza, Muarati, and Gramaldi, we will ask them, too, to partake of our hospitality. The money will enable us to dine them well.”

The restive Lucien could no longer be restrained.

“Is all this electioneering in the sacred name of Liberty or to make you lieutenant-colonel?”

Napoleon's eye flashed.

“Both,” he answered. “The strong man goes up with the Cause.” Then he turned with better nature to Joseph. “But you, my dear brother? You do not reply. Certainly you approve?”

Joseph's fine expressive eyes looked troubled as he glanced up from his ledger.

“Have you fully considered the position in which you will place us?” he soberly replied. “It is not alone the matter of money, but the political situation. Even the Corsicans who accepted the Revolution are growing restive under France; and the new decree driving out their priests from the monasteries has so incensed them that three fourths of the townspeople now are ready for riots. They hate the French, their countrymen who have enlisted in the Guard and put on the French uniform, and you for your activities in forming the Guard—to say nothing of *other* things. Yet you suggest, my brother, the bringing in of all these recruits, to quarter them in our homes.

“There is a third condition, too, that is hardly favorable. Old Maillard with his regiment holds the citadel

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here. He is a royalist and has small sympathy with the Revolution. In the case of an attack on our home by the townspeople, he wouldn't lift a finger. You need not consider the rest of us, Napoleon, but at least think of your mother."

"There is a time, my dear brother, to be politic, and a time not to be," replied Napoleon, who had been listening impatiently. "We have got nowhere by diplomacy. Now is the time to strike."

Finishing abruptly, he sat down at the table, seized Joseph's quill and a sheet of paper, and rapidly scribbled off a note in his almost undecipherable handwriting. Then he went to a window which gave out on the terrace, where, he had observed, their new servant, Maria Antonia, was talking with an admirer. Signaling the youth, he gave him a few sous and ordered him to take the note to the Abbé Fesch.

In five minutes the apple-cheeked abbé appeared, looking nettled and disturbed, because from experience he suspected he was to be called on to pull some of his nephew's chestnuts out of the fire. Besides, one of the natives had just hurled imprecations after him for taking the oath of allegiance to the French Assembly which had driven out the monks.

As he deposited his broad clerical hat on the table, he addressed Napoleon.

"It would have been more fitting, my nephew, had you waited on me. Yet you send for me, and for what? To abet you in a fresh intrigue when I have had disagreeable evidence of your old ones. A parishioner of mine just swore at me for a traitor priest!"

Napoleon sat down opposite, attempting to mollify

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him. And it was astonishing how the stern line of that mouth could melt in utter candor and charm.

“Come, uncle, you cannot blame me for that. And why heed the cursers? Cursers swear but seldom act.” Then he explained the scheme.

“What?” grumbled the abbé when he had finished. “Turn your mother’s home into a lodging-house and visit a plague of country grasshoppers on me and Cousin Ramolino! You’ll succeed in driving us all to France.”

“If so, to a larger stage,” returned his nephew; then more placatingly: “As a family we are bound to rise or fall together. My promotion will help us all. But I know, uncle, you agree, for you always grumble a little, but in the end are generous.”

“In the end, yes, because otherwise you would never leave a man in peace.”

With this grudging assent, Napoleon, hearing a familiar step outside, went to the staircase to see his mother ascending, candle in hand. She turned midway, at her son’s call, and sighed when he finished the outline of his project.

“Money comes so hard and goes so easily,” she said.

Then for a moment she studied him with her fine eyes, not so large as his, which were full-orbed like his father’s, but dark and brilliant, and because of their forthrightness more fearless than any man’s.

“Are you sure this is wise?” she at last asked.

For once the young adventurer hesitated, then shook off the hesitation.

“Why not?” he answered. “We shall never get anywhere by waiting for opportunity. We must make it.”

“All right, my son,” she said, and left him.

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A second he stared after her with an unwonted expression of tenderness. The carriage of her fine figure was noble enough to have graced a royal staircase. Perhaps he was thinking that some day he would like to place her there. Then he returned to the waiting three to issue his orders in detail, while on her pillow Letizia counted the number of her beds, the spare mattresses she could install on the floor, the cheeses in her store-room, and the fish she could buy against the descent of those grasshopper recruits on her household.

So it was that she awoke on Maundy Thursday to find her home turned into a lodging-house, as Fesch had prophesied. When she got up, during the night, to administer calomel to Caroline, and again to rub the leg of little Jerome, who was suffering from growing-pains, she had stumbled over a horde of snoring troopers. Now she could see their mattresses everywhere. In the dining-room were ashes and broken pipe-stems, the lees from overturned glasses of wine. Above stairs it was worse. Evidently most of the upland recruits preferred to sleep in their clothes. Cakes of mud were on the carpets, the bowls were unemptied, and wisps of hair and uncleansed shaving-brushes littered the wash-stands. She was glad when they had gone for the day and left her to her baking.

It was here that the abbé, who had escaped from his own guests, found her. But his commiserations were interrupted, first by a violent pounding at a door within, then by a call for help from a third-story window.

They looked up. A wrathful face with disheveled and disarrayed neck-cloth appeared at the window. Letizia looked distressed.

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“It’s Signor Muarati!” she exclaimed. “I do not understand.”

“Another guest of your hospitable son,” the abbé replied, then explained: “He is one of the judges who will preside at the election. The other two Napoleon put up at my house and our cousin’s; but Muarati refused and went with our neighbor, young Peraldi, who also wants to be lieutenant-colonel. Now no sooner does Napoleon hear of this than he goes to Peraldi’s, breaks in on their dinner, and expounds to them on the iniquity of a judge’s accepting the hospitality of a candidate.

“Peraldi, as is natural, replies that Napoleon is tarred with the same stick, and Napoleon is indignant. He invited no judges to his own house, he declares—they were with me, you see, and Cousin Ramolino—and Peraldi’s invitation was violently enforced. Then promptly he drags Muarati from his wine-glasses, quite as he used to chase our poor uncle’s goats, bleating through the streets, up to the third story there, where he locks him in.

“Your son’s first *coup d'état*, madame,” he added dryly; “and I doubt if it helps him much, though there was little question but that Peraldi would have got to Muarati. I’m afraid that this time Napoleon went off half cocked.”

Letizia, thoroughly ashamed of her rôle as hostess to this enforced guest, was in a quandary whether to release Muarati; but just then Joseph and Lucien appeared. She had not seen much of her sons recently. For once a sense of importance had overcome any tendency of Lucien’s to criticism, and they were constantly going and coming, cloaked and taciturn, on mysterious excursions. Nor did she see much of them this morning, for they left im-

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mediately, carrying off the judge to the convent where the election was to be held. The abbé, too, left his sister to her worries, and at a little distance followed them.

Already he had noticed more than the usual signs of trouble in the town. Women were chattering bitterly in the doorways; *cittadini* were gathered at the corners; and squads of the National Guard were patrolling the streets. Curses followed them whenever they appeared, as *paesani*, degenerate Corsican bumpkins from the country who wore the French uniform and helped put out the priests from the monasteries. And sometimes he heard himself, as a forsown priest, and all the Bonapartes, included in the curses. Truly his nephew had laid powder-mines all over Ajaccio, when in his electioneering zeal he had brought in all these guardsmen from the hills.

Letizia had paused in the doorway, to watch her brother disappear up the street. Save for those bluecoats and the knots of citizens, it all seemed very peaceful. Up and down the highways, the elms and plane-trees revealed the lighter emerald of April. Against the gray and cream and old ivory of house and garden and cathedral wall, they formed a wavering tapestry of green, figured with the mimosa's trailing yellow, the white of tangerine, orange, and cherry blossoms, the pink of almond and peach; and by the sun high over the dome of San Giovanni Battista shot through with interlacing gold.

And from everywhere came the fragrance of the blossoms in the gardens, wildly commingled with the aroma of myrtle, thyme, arbutus, and rosemary, the tang of juniper and wild olive, borne by the breezes from the uplands beyond the city walls. There is nothing quite like it outside of Corsica; and it smote through the physical

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sense, with the poignant prophecy of 'something passing, straight to her heart.'

The abbé meanwhile had paused at the cathedral to watch, almost absent-mindedly, a group of girls playing at bowls in the center of the street. An Ajaccian loafer in ragged knee-breeches and a sailor in the long bell-shaped trousers and short pot-hat of the French marines stood on opposite sides of the street. For a while all was a merry swirl of olive arms and ankles, brown and scarlet petticoats; then suddenly a dispute arose; there were shrill cries and gesticulations, all amusing enough until the loafer took up the cause of one of the girls. At once the sailor plunged in, and the two were wrestling, Laocoön fashion, hands grasping wrists with uplifted steel, girls pommeling the backs of each, when a squad of the blue-clad Guard came on a quick-step around the corner to arrest the brawlers.

It was only a street quarrel, but the powder had been ignited! Seeing those bluecoats, all the citizens gathered on the corners ran at once for the scene, crying, "*Adosso alle paesani, alle spallette, alle berrette!*"—down with everything they hated. And from the adjoining houses others emerged, brandishing arms, while the windows above bristled with protruding muskets. Immediately the milling crowd became an inextricable mêlée of blue coats, black bonnets, sailor's trousers, and scarlet petticoats, punctuated here and there by violently agitated muskets, over which brawlers were wrestling, or the gleam of descending steel. As the mob swayed up and down the street, it left forms in its wake, lying inert in the central gutters or propped up fantastically against the boles of the sycamores.

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At the convent, just outside the city walls, Napoleon heard the discharge of firearms and at once hurried to the citadel with his new epaulets and a few of his officers. Leaving his companions without, he strode through the tower into old Maillard's room and with a curt suggestion that was almost a demand asked the commandant to "beat the assembly" and call out his regulars to quell the disturbance.

But old Maillard, cunning old Royalist, could quite contentedly see these brawling islanders and the Revolutionary *canaille* carve up one another. So he sat, his heels cocked on a chair, his waistcoat unbuttoned, sipping his Campolora, which, since it was red and like Burgundy, he preferred to the light Furiani.

"Your health, lieutenant—or is it lieutenant-colonel?" he said facetiously, raising his glass. "You made this fire. Now you can put it out!"

For once Napoleon did not have his way, and with an angry "The blood be on your head then," he hurried from the room, impressed a few more officers, all unarmed, and made for the seminary.

It was thus that the abbé, who had taken shelter in the cathedral doorway, saw his active nephew appear on the scene. And in spite of his horror, he thought to himself that the boy cut, not an imposing, but an absurd figure. At that distance the shortness of his stature was more than ever apparent, and his quick eager stride seemed both fussy and self-important.

Still, he was intrepid enough, for with no weapons but a quick gesture, and a voice too sharp and curt to be called stentorian, he ordered the rioters to stop running after his soldiers. Then all at once he did not seem absurd. Before

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his glance the crowd dissolved into knots, sullen and glowering, but not lifting a finger, with the exception of one *cittadino*, in the center of the street, who leveled a musket at Napoleon.

The abbé recognized the Ajaccian as a carpenter who had done some repair work for him, and, remembering his wrong-headedness, feared for Napoleon. But the young lieutenant advanced upon the man and seized the musket. Then, recognizing it as one that had been wrested from his soldiers, he confiscated it and tossed it over to an officer.

As the carpenter retreated toward the cathedral, a woman beckoned to him from a gate in the adjoining wall. She had a musket in her hand. At the same time seven men, who had been hiding in the cathedral, rushed out, brandishing arms. Seeing these reinforcements, the carpenter grabbed the musket, wheeled, and, almost without aiming, fired.

In the center of the street stood a large fountain used by the townspeople for their water-supply as well as for that of their stock. Over its edge a figure fell, a stream from its heart clouding the clear pool in the bowl with a dull reddish brown. The abbé leaning forward from the cathedral doors, tried to scan the face as the stream from the grotesque stone images above spattered the distorted features.

“Young del Sarra!” he exclaimed. “It is too bad. A fine boy with a worthy mother.”

Then, still thinking of his townspeople’s threats, but more of his duty as a priest, he hurried to the fountain.

Napoleon, however, seized him by the arm.

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“Too late,” he said; “for you also, uncle, if you do not return to the cathedral!”

The abbé was none too quick in heeding the warning, for as he reached shelter, a rain of bullets spattered the cathedral façade, showering on his broad clerical hat the yellow powder of the stucco.

By now the whole town, it seemed, had poured into the Street of the Fountain. Oblivious to the reckless firing, men and women were pressing forward, intent only on crushing the little group of unarmed officers, who, with Napoleon at their head, were being forced back against the wall of the house opposite the cathedral.

Unpopular as Napoleon had been declared, there was at least one neighbor who now showed herself loyal to him, a girl of fifteen, a Marianne Tervano, who lived in the house against which the beleaguered officers pressed. Heedless of the flying bullets, she wildly gesticulated to call his attention.

Napoleon, who by his glance appeared to be holding the mob at bay, at last caught the signal.

“*Grâce à Dieu!*” exclaimed the abbé; “they’ve made it! They’re through, Napoleon last! From there they can get by the back way to the convent.”

And in relief he grinned; his nephew had, in spite of him, compelled his admiration. Then he shook his head sadly. “He’ll be back with more soldiers. Are they to repeat Paris here—at Eastertide?”

And indeed it was a strange red mass for the celebration of the most joyous festival of the year, the one marking the resurgence of hope, the resurrection of life. Everywhere around them were signs of the eternal springtime; and the delicate fragrance of the gardens mingled with

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the heavier aroma of myrtle and arbutus, thyme and wild olive, coming down from the hills. And there on the reddened stones they were picking up the inert forms, and the one of the dead young officer by the mocking faces of the fountain.

All that week the civil war continued in guerrilla fashion. At night those who dared to walk the scented streets could see the saffron and ox-blood flares from burning orchards and farmsteads outside the walls.

It was scarcely a happy week for Letizia, though she was accustomed to the uncertainties and horrors of warfare. Napoleon vouchsafed little information. Indeed he was not at home often enough to vouchsafe anything, dashing into the house at intervals, with set mouth and determined mien. And again the family had turned rather critical.

“All to get himself elected a lieutenant-colonel!” the abbé exclaimed sadly, when reports of fresh fatalities came in. “A big price to pay for a promotion!”

And once she overheard Lucien remark to Joseph:

“Preferment and Patriotism make a fine team; but when their courses lie up different roads, Preferment will kick Patriotism to death. One is apt, if a subaltern, to side with the Revolution. It might be a different story now, if one happened to be a general.”

No names were mentioned, but Letizia realized that the remarks were aimed in a particular rather than a general direction. And Joseph had made no answer. But Napoleon, she knew, would have a defense. There were elements in the situation beyond his control and for which he was not responsible. And she felt grateful that he had not been

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unmindful of her. Each time she looked out of the front windows she could see the guard he had placed there for her protection, and a carriage ready waiting, in case there should be need for flight.

And no one could deny that he was doing all he could to restore order, nor, in fact, that he was the most active spirit in the whole city. When she stepped out of doors, there were the cannon on the top of the Genoese Towers pointing their black muzzles at the cathedral square. While the commandant, the old Royalist Maillard, sipped his Campolora in the citadel, covertly watching the "rats" and "ferrets" destroying each other, and the newly elected colonel of the Guard ran round in circles, Napoleon had constituted himself generalissimo of the situation. Despatching messengers to distant points, he had brought in more companies of the Guard, seized the Tower, the fountains furnishing the city's only water-supply, and halted at the gates all wagons bringing food from the hills. The citizens now were compelled almost to eat out of his hand; and they hated him the more for it.

On the fifth day old Maillard woke up and stationed cannon in the streets. He was about to precipitate a civil war between his regulars and the Guardsmen, though they wore the same uniform, when the commissioners from the governor, old General Paoli, arrived. With protean swiftness, Napoleon now changed his rôle, if not his uniform, constituting himself go-between and peacemaker; and order was restored.

Nevertheless he was summoned to the inquiry held by the commissioners that night in the cathedral, in something, perhaps, of a defendant's status. Letizia, of course,

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could not go, but Joseph and Lucien, with the abbé, attended.

The scene inside the church was arranged with unconscious drama—the dome above shrouded in darkness, the aisles in twilight, pierced only by the twinkling flames of the candles at the shrines, while the oil-lamps on the pillars forward and the tapers at the altar formed a high light for the judges and the accused, gathered under the flaring canopy of the pulpit, near a gigantic crucifix, and the taper-surrounded body of the slain del Sarra.

Napoleon had already entered, and the abbé glimpsed him gazing sorrowfully down on the features of his former comrade, with a nobler expression than usual. It was significant, though, that when the inquiry started, the look changed to one of vigilance blended with a certain hauteur that made him appear as if one of the questioners rather than one of the questioned. However real his grief, whatever his sentiments, they were thrust from him when the moment for action came.

Out of the conflicting evidence of the many witnesses, it was difficult to get at the truth, though Napoleon's testimony impressed the abbé as the most plausible. Certainly it was the most intelligibly and confidently given.

“While the rest sat still, gaped, ran round in circles, I was the only one who acted,” he declared to the astounded judges.

All were baffled, and the inquiry wound up at midnight with no guilt laid on any particular pair of shoulders, though from Napoleon's the new lieutenant-colonel's epaulets disappeared, by order of the governor. His three years' activities in Ajaccio had not yielded much. He

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was once more merely a *sous-lieutenant*—back almost where he had started.

However, he determined to go north. His mother, fearing for Marianne Elisa in the revolutionary disorders, had asked him to bring back his sister from the school at St.-Cyr near Paris.

Then, too, he had by a considerable margin overstayed his furlough; and, as he was a firm believer in Destiny, it did not suit him to slink back to his regiment at Auxonne. He would explain his absence without leave to the authorities in Paris—those lions who were about to launch the Reign of Terror. Incidentally, he promised himself, while he secured absolution, he would talk them into a captaincy.

CHAPTER V

He Buys a Birthday Gift for a Young Lady

THE capital in 1792 was not as one sees it now. It had not then so much of long-shot vista; and was an astonishing jumble of tall gray old houses, mansard roofs and chimney-pots of the seventeenth century, château tourelles of the sixteenth, and palace façades and cone-capped prison towers—everywhere there were prisons—of the tenth to the thirteenth; with convents built on Roman ruins, and the first new boulevards of this latter era just below the whirling windmills of Montmartre; all girdled still by grass-grown walls that knew many centuries, and split by a never resting river that had outlasted all.

In the older quarters, the streets seemed mere ax-clefts, so narrow they were. All around the wayfarer was that lovely and infinite detail that meant Paris—retreating façades, swinging street-signs, red and gold clocks, dusky shop-windows, brown buttresses, Romanesque arches, tunnels disappearing into dim courtyards, the rounded apses of hidden churches, segments of green gardens, fountains ensconced in niches, gravestones, cloisters, and dungeon cells. Above, the eye traveled over carved balcony and mullioned bay, peeling stucco, half-timbered gable, and

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ancient tourelle to the little attic windows at all angles, and a charming infinitude of dormers, towers, weather-cocks, and the eternal twisted chimney-pots, to the little cramped rectangles of blue that revealed the sky.

From this bewildering but delightful maze one would emerge on an old bridge-head over the river, fishermen under the arches or on a broad *quai*, back of which the tall gray houses loomed with the effect of serried ships at the waterfront; for all their stillness and immobility, they seemed destined to move and bear down on the beholder.

There were other open spaces too—by all the bridges over the winding river, before Notre Dame, the four fool's-capped towers of the Temple Prison, the Grand Châtelet, the City Hall or *Hôtel de Ville*, by the abbeys and convents, the Palais de Justice, the open galleries of the Palais Royal, the Champs Elysées, and the Tuileries.

But it was practically rather than esthetically that Napoleon, viewed the city as he sat erect in the diligence, a little forward on the seat, with eyes that missed not a trick. At an inn-courtyard he alighted, secured lodgings in an attic on the rue du Mail, then hurried down the six flights to move through the crowds of market-women, shop-keepers, hawkers, orators, pamphleteers, gamblers, prostitutes, enlisting soldiers, and ragged, *sansculottes*, which, with the myriad church bells and saluting cannon on the Champs de Mars gave tongue and life to the scene.

The signs of demolition he particularly noted—shells of houses, truncated church naves, where advanced the new boulevards; scaffolding around old palace walls. With his sense of order, he decided that he would have torn down more; cut a street through here; opened a square there; swept away those clusters of old houses where the king's

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equerries were quartered, and the old rookeries which hid the serene façades, the roses and shining statues of the Garden of the Tuileries. Also he would never have allowed those gangs of loafers around the mouthing orators to obstruct passage. They should be carted off to La Force. A revolution was all right; he was for it. But it should be a regimented revolution, conducted by patriots, it was true, but marshaled and disciplined, led by Plutarch's men—he could lay his hand on one now.

The rising costs, too, worried him. Everything was going up—bread, rents—that was why he still had to lodge in an attic—and, what was worse, the cost of printing. He inquired about this from a bespectacled *Révolutionnaire*, who kept a pamphlet shop. To print the pamphlet he had in mind would cost eighty *louis*, whereas, back in Auxonne, he had been quoted twenty.

Political conditions, however, fascinated him even more than social and economic; and he found himself inevitably drawn to the troubled heart of the city, just then in the king's old riding-academy, north of the Tuileries, where now runs the rue de Rivoli, and in which the assembly sat. Terrace and approaches were crowded, but at last he forced an entrance and edged his thin body into a front place on one of the benches allotted the populace, where a ragged mob from shop and gutter were beginning to howl for the head of the king, and black-breeched tipstaffs with silver chains around their necks tried hard to keep order. The space beyond the barrier had been hastily equipped with desks draped with green baize. Here the deputies sat, shepherded by a president, Vergniaud, at a higher desk, his hand on a huge bell which he rang incessantly. Never before, Napoleon thought, had

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such a collection of decorous wigs and unkempt thatches, of hares and wolves, been gathered together.

With a critical eye he gaged them as he might applicants for his staff or cabinet.—Dumas, Jaucourt—“ideologues.” . . . Roland—“marshal of a *salon*.” . . . Bris-
sot, Gaudet, Vergniaud—“palaverers, drunk with phrases.” . . . Bigot, Pastoret—“swimmers with the tide.” So he dismissed them.

But there, to the left, were the grim “Men of the Mountain”: Desmoulins’ splotched face, Danton’s lion front, and the ribald Couthon’s twisted torso. Not far away were the abnormally large but handsome features of Saint-Just, *l’enfant terrible* of the Revolution, the foul bandages of Marat, and the lace cuffs, the faultless blue swallowtail, and the nose of Robespierre—the most inquisitive nose in all the world! Rolling eyes and frenzied, eyes cool and calculating; but almost all evil. They were to be despised; but they had force, therefore were to be respected. A grotesque group and formidable. These he did not dismiss.

Nor did he dread them. For he rarely felt fear, never a sense of inferiority. So, very coolly he studied them, not, of course, piercing to the heart of each but making pretty shrewd guesses. Studied them, too, not only with hopes—very disturbed hopes now—for the Revolution, but with an eye for those who might help him out of his scrape and secure his promotion. Of all he thought Lazare Carnot the most likely to give aid.

Carnot was a deputy from Calais and one who, it was breezed about, would make his mark. And recently he had been appointed to the Military Committee. His alert carriage, gaunt figure, stern mouth, and face so lean that

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hollows showed under the cheek-bones as if stamped by circular dies, made him appear, to Napoleon, more nearly like Plutarch's men than any of the others.

For several days after this visit to the riding-academy, he tried to secure an interview. At the Hôtel Arras, where Carnot lodged, the shabby lieutenant was kept cooling his heels, as he was at the War Department, where commiteemen ran around like poultry already guillotined. So he was left to his rambles about Paris, the study of astronomy, which he now took up, and whose poetry and mathematics both appealed to him, and occasional calls on the Permons, old Corsican neighbors. And he began to feel like the star scholar of some provincial school lost in the crowd of brilliant aspirants when he comes up to the university at the capital. At last, chafing at the delay, he hurried over to the assembly one morning, determined by hook or crook to see this great man whom he had singled out for a patron. When Carnot left, he caught up with him by the porter's lodge and touched him on the shoulder.

"Pardon, citizen deputy," he said rapidly; "but I have read your treatises, your 'Essai sur les Machines en Général,' and your 'Eloge' of Vauban. Now you support the perpendicular system of fortifications advocated by Montalembert and oppose that of Vauban. There are questions I would ask you about them."

The great man turned, looked at him harshly. He was a little annoyed because, for all the prefaced apology, one would have thought from the manner of his questioner that the positions of official and petitioner had been reversed. Still, Napoleon with unerring judgment had hit on the great man's weakness, his vanity in his work.

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“*Eh bien!*” he retorted. “So you’re the *mauvais sujet* that stirred things up in Corsica! Well, no matter. What are your questions? Come with me. I will answer them.”

Such was his only reproof. He linked his arm in the young lieutenant’s, and soon they were on their way under the horse-chestnuts of the Tuileries, arguing and expounding this point and that of fortifications. Before Carnot left him, to proceed to the Hôtel Arras, hard by the palace, Napoleon had secured a promise, not only of pardon, but of a possible captaincy in the artillery—quite as he had prophesied on quitting Corsica. His flattering word about that “*Eloge*” and “*Essai*” had been but a ruse. Secretly he disapproved of every theory the great man had.

“They call him a great man! Bah! He’s a reed, bronzed,” he mused. “Though he’s better than most of the rabble that sit in the riding-academy there. They’re a lot of braying wild asses that should be ridden, and not in the saddle themselves.”

He was a little skeptical of the promise, and it was in rather a disgruntled state of mind that he turned and paused for a moment on the Pont Royal. The Pavillon de Flore, the corner of the Palace of the Tuileries, showed above the breast-wall of the gardens and the fans of the horse-chestnut trees. On his walk he had seen the sickly little Dauphin busy with rake and hoe in his patch of garden. And he had watched the king, now virtually a prisoner after his runaway to Varennes, on his constitutional among the statues, accompanied by guarding soldiers. Corpulent, puffing, plodding, he seemed vaguely concerned, not as if he feared the oncoming deluge, but as though he did not know what it was all about.

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Now, at the windows above, Napoleon caught a glimpse of a lady in a white head-dress over escaping curls. There was no mistaking the shapely, if aquiline, features, by any one who had ever seen prints of the queen. At that moment he thought she looked down on him, that her eyes held his. Shabby adventurer or ominous shadow—studying her there so intently from the bridge over the Seine! Dislike her as he did in theory all of the old régime, he almost experienced a fellow-feeling for her, another alien. Even the shopkeepers of whom he made his small purchases recognized him as such. Then the queen moved away; and a man of about his own age, who had been staring, more fascinated even than Napoleon, hailed him—a bit patronizingly, he thought.

“*Bonjour, citoyen!*” Then, “Well, if it isn’t my old comrade, the little Bonaparte, from Corsica! And just a lieutenant still! I thought by now you would be a general.”

Napoleon recognized his accoster as Bourrienne, once a schoolmate at Brienne. With the chagrin of a sensitive nature, he recalled the affection which, boy-like, he had offered, only to have it chilled by his new-found friend’s superciliousness. Now, therefore, he accepted the invitation for refreshment at the Palais Royal politely but without enthusiasm. As they talked he found his previous impressions of Bourrienne strengthened. A fairly gifted fellow of good address, but rating himself beyond his deserts, touchy and toploftical! Why, he had been patronizing even in his invitation, ostentatious in urging on his friend new dishes; and all because he knew his coat was less rubbed, his pockets better lined.

But then perhaps Napoleon was touchy himself. In fact, this was what Bourrienne was thinking as he smil-

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ingly entertained his friend. Certainly his guest was bitter in his comments on the nobles who in purple, cinnamon, and crimson coats still strode among the *filles* and gamblers, under the trellises and by the fountains of Richelieu's old home. And the young man was bitter, Bourrienne suspected, not only because he thought these promenaders an offense to the body politic; he was envious of their better positions and incomes. And there was some truth in this.

After these lonely weeks of waiting and cooling his heels, however, Napoleon welcomed even this spurious friendship; told something of his experiences; spoke of politics and his endeavors to lease some tenements in the rue Montholon. He had little money; but he could have sublet them immediately at a profit, the city was so crowded—if the owners hadn't asked so much. He also vouchsafed something about a visit made the day before to the veterinary hospital at Charenton. It was enlightening to any one interested in cavalry. Old Chabert, the chief, had shown him the dissection-room. In other chambers he had on display every part of a horse. One, too, might learn of the progress of distempers. This was shown on other exhibits pickled in brine.

Bourrienne shrugged his shoulders. They never got on well together; and just then they were a pair of morose, discontented young men.

“If you search for the morbid,” he said, “you should have gone with me. There is a new instrument called *la guillotine*, set up in the Place de Grève. It resembles the old beheading-machines used in the Middle Ages, only it is more perfect.

“I saw it work last spring in the hospital at Bicêtre—

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on corpses—and on the neck of a live thief yesterday. It is an upside-down U of wood with a piece of sharp steel at the top, held by a rope caught on a little catch. Just a touch of the finger on that catch; the steel triangle descends through the grooves, and they carry you away in a basket! Very neat and pretty, my friend."

"And they have perfected it, you say," Napoleon laconically returned, "only for thieves. You will see it promoted."

His remark, which seemed so pregnant with prophecy, was, however, half idly made. The physical symbol of the Revolution was then but an inventor's toy. When the good Dr. Guillotine had presented it to the Assembly, as a painless device for the despatching of criminals, it had been laughed out of court. And indeed the upheaval had, up to this time, been marked by little violence. There had been the fall of the Bastille, a few other forts in the provinces, the descent of the wild women on Versailles, the capture of the king at Varennes, and a deal of speech-making, harangue, and parade.

And now, like Napoleon himself, the Revolution seemed to be marking time. But it was marking time no more than the young man as he walked about Paris, surveying the scene in which he was determined, though he knew not how, to take some part. An infinite number of sojourners down through the ages have walked over these same stones, under the eaves of Paris; but never have rambles been so fruitful. While outwardly one may seem to make little progress, the mind may be making rapid and forced marches, leagues ahead. And Napoleon's was doing just that, whether or not he realized it at the time. As a matter of fact, for all his clear thinking, he was somewhat

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confused by events and on the verge of disillusionment.

They had adjourned to Bourrienne's lodgings, where conversation would be less dangerous.

“Tell me, what has your Revolution done?” Napoleon shot at Bourrienne, who lay with boot-heels on the bed.

“Why—eh—it is obvious,” returned his friend sententiously. “Frenchmen are free, have a constitution, own their own land, and vote. Whereas before—”

“Oh, I know,” interrupted Napoleon; “all the old prate, which in your heart concerns you not a whit: ‘No longer are we forced to grind our corn at the seigneur’s mill, bake our bread in his ovens, take our grapes to his wine-press, whip the ponds to still the frogs so that my lady may sleep. No more do we go to the galleys for stealing a loaf of bread; starve, grovel in dungeons; pay tithes, exactions innumerable’—*voilà!* I can repeat all the phrases: ‘rents *chéantes et levantes*, rents *solidaires et revanchables*, *chévanches*, *quintaines*; *chansons*; *corvée à miséricorde*’—Lucien is full of them, and you can get them from any corner pamphleteer. I myself have used them on occasion.

“They are true too,” he added; “but what I mean is, where are we getting?”

“I came up from Marseilles via Lyons and Grenoble. And I observed Jacques Bonhomme. Instead of being grateful that he could vote, own his own land, he was strutting and swaggering. He does not know how to use his freedom. He smells blood. Lust and violence were in the air. And it is worse here in Paris.”

His friend, nonplussed, said nothing. Indeed he had little stomach for the Revolution, except as it might affect his own fortunes. He took the questions at face-value, not

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realizing that their irony hid a troubled heart, that Napoleon was questioning himself and was puzzled to find the answer.

The following week, at the Permons, Napoleon continued this rather dangerous habit of sounding people out.

The Permons had been old neighbors of the Bonapartes, back in Ajaccio, but had removed to Paris, some years before, becoming, like provincials, more "citified" than the bona-fide Parisians. They patronized him, accordingly, quite as much as had Bourrienne, treating him as residents of the capital might a country cousin. However, he had passed the instabilities of adolescence, and the old fear of appearing *maladroit* that he had experienced at Madame Maret's no longer oppressed him. He knew that he was poorly dressed, lacked polish; but his harsh direct manner as much as said, "Take me or leave me, as I am." And he had a stern sort of military poise which, if not fitted for the crystal pendants, dead-gold mirrors, and satinwood chairs of their drawing-room, might have impressed those more discerning than the climbing Permons.

Scarcely of the nobility, Madame Permon had resurrected some old story about being descended from a Greek princess, to establish herself on a proper footing; the more easily achieved in a city where family soon was to count for so little. With his shrewd common sense, Napoleon was skeptical about the claim and inclined to ridicule this and other pretensions. Still, the Permons had been kind to his father when he lay dying of cancer at Montpellier, far from his family and home. And no true Corsican forgets a kindness.

After he had been ushered into the drawing-room with Bourrienne, they divided into groups for conversations

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tête-à-tête. Madame, the plump hostess and a woman of considerable charm and generosity of heart, though her dialogue ran chiefly to gossip about "the good families" and her own ailments, seated herself with a flurry of skirts by a neighbor. Young Albert, a youth very much concerned just now with his tailor, the Greek princess legend, and questions of etiquette, chatted with a young lady visitor; and Laurette, the daughter of the house, with Bourrienne. It fell to Napoleon's lot, therefore, to listen to Monsieur Permon, who was profoundly interested in the study of herbs.

Laurette was a thoughtless vivacious young lady who might with maturity grow intelligent. Thinking that Napoleon, engaged as he was, could not hear, she said to Bourrienne:

"Refreshing, isn't he? Both awkward and amusing—and so proud! We used to call him 'Puss in Boots,' his were so absurdly large. And yellow as he is, you should see him flush when he puts his hand in his pocket to pay for a fiacre and finds nothing there."

"I quite understand, Mademoiselle Laurette," returned Bourrienne. "He would not eat, did I not invite him once in a while to dinner. I'm glad to do it," he added condescendingly, "for he is a friend. But he orders one about so!"

"Sh-h! Take care! He is looking at us, not minding at all what Poppa says about his vetches and potatoes. He is a strange young man. Even when he cannot hear what you are saying, he reads what is in your mind."

Indeed Napoleon's eyes were on them rather searchingly now. When the older man paused, he said abruptly to Mademoiselle Laurette:

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“Is there nothing that concerns your sex but the surface? The cut of a man’s coat, a woman’s fallals? You women are nothing but magpies. You are in the midst of a great upheaval that will make history; yet you care not a whit, only as it affects your dresses, your feathers and frills. All you think is: ‘Will there be any more entertainments and balls?’ ”

Then his face relapsed into his charming smile, and he said more placatingly, “Come, mademoiselle, is it not so?”

Laurette shrugged a white shoulder.

“You flatter us, monsieur. I have heard of one, Jeanne d’Arc, that was interested in affairs of state.”

“A miraculous exception!” Then he turned his lieutenant’s back on them to address monsieur.

“Your Marie Antoinette, too, is an exception, but no miracle. She stubbornly persists in correspondence with her Austrian and Prussian friends, when their armies are over our borders. Louis is fat, a fool; still, he would make little trouble but for her.

“And where are we?” he went on, repeating the question he had asked Bourrienne. “The Austrian armies almost on the plains of Paris, yet all yelping within! The ministry, Roland, Brissot, accused of bargaining with the king. Desmoulins traffics in army stores; Danton, too, they accuse; while the foul chemist, Marat, that mass of running sores that stinks, yet whom the people hail as a savior, asks Roland for money, then, when it is refused, tries to stab him in the back. All corrupt and venal! They cry, ‘La Patrie is in danger!’ but care not whether France is plunged in ruin, provided they themselves come out on top. No,” he concluded, “there is not a real leader among them. I—”

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Here he broke off as abruptly as he had begun; and the silver-wigged botanist was not too engrossed in his pursuit to gaze at the fiery young man inquiringly, wondering what the finish of that sentence might have been.

But only for a second. Soon he returned to his vetches and potatoes, which were of far more interest than questions of politics. And the young man left for his attic on the rue du Mail to pour out something of his feelings on paper to Lucien, whom the affection of absence had re-stored once more to favor.

“Those who are at the head are pitiable creatures,” he wrote. “The populace is scarcely worthy the trouble of winning its favor. You know Ajaccio. Well, the situation in Paris is much the same. Its inhabitants are worse, more given to gambling and slander. You must get the close view of the thing to see that enthusiasm is only enthusiasm; that the French are in their dotage, have lost all their virility and muscle.”

To his mother he sent inquiries about her health and that of the youngsters and old Mammucia Caterina, a few domestic injunctions, and his love.

Then he sat back on his dilapidated chair, so different from the Louis Seize gilt and marquetry of the Permons’ drawing-room, biting his quill, a thoroughly disillusioned young man. That “close view of the thing” was, after all, very hard to get.

He had come up to Paris, still swayed—at least in part—by the ideals and principles that had engaged his youth. At a remove, he had visioned the leaders of the Revolution as burning with the sacred fire, bright with the pristine purity of his heroes of old. Of course, common sense had suggested some reserves. But he had not dreamt

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that it could be all such a network of prejudices, chicaneries, and selfish interests. It was enlightening to find that they could be bribed, browbeaten, tricked, quite as had the Corsican factions back home.

There had been a curious naïveté about his hopes. And possibly like most of us he itched to see others follow ideals which he himself found it impossible always to follow. Yet he was not wholly the opportunist; the love of liberty had not died out. But here the pinch of leaven was, to his mind, so pitifully small. There had been Lafayette, possibly Carnot and Mirabeau. But the Lafayettes were bunglers; could not handle the crowds--to the young lieutenant the unforgivable sin.

He had seen the mobs force their way into the palace to place a filthy red cap on the king's head.

“Che coglione!” he had said to Bourrienne. “Why don't they cut down four or five hundred with cannon? The rest would scamper off fast enough!”

The wish had not been so unnatural as it had seemed. It all offended his sense of chieftainship and order, outraged his stern military soul.

It was so hard to find the thread that might lead out of the maze. And there was no good angel sitting in that attic to whisper that there *was* a white thread; that human beings are variously motivated; that even the terriers of the mob and the wolves of the tribune, however unworthy, may be used as instruments for final good.

In his sense of chieftainship and order lay a real danger; in his survey of this welter of selfishness all around him, still another—that he might follow suit. It was a peril that would threaten any impoverished young man

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in search of a career, and with a family to which he was devoted on his hands.

So sat the young Napoleon in his attic, biting his quill, staring out over the roofs of Paris, and, since there was no good angel to speak to him there, listening to other whispers, the whispers of Paris, slowly growing to a tumultuous roar.

With the night hours, the men from Brittany, the wild men from Marseilles, whom the leaders had summoned to Paris, had left their bivouac by the river and swarmed through the streets. He could hear the tread of myriad feet, the cries of the marching Sections of the city, the shouts of the crowd. And the shouting was mingled with singing, not lyrical nor vibrant with that glory of which the songs told, but hoarse from ten thousand frenzied throats, eager for vengeance, the sword, the shrieks of victims, streams of blood.

He looked out of the window, down on the hurrying press of pikes, muskets; down on the dancing torch-lights; on the red bonnets—when up rose the song, ringing and fierce:

Allons enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!

The dawn of glory is at hand! . . .

The stray wind that tossed the tangled locks about the listener's face carried the strains—on, up to the stars. In those stars—in one particularly, he believed.

The morning of the ninth did not stand “tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.” It came red and leaden-footed, to settle humid and hectic on the streets and housetops, as if

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to reflect the state of men's minds. People arose and went to work. Bakers browned their bread in ovens; waiters shook out clean cloths over the table-tops; women suckled their babies in the gardens of Notre Dame; and soft-voiced sisters moved through the wards of the hospital, L'Hôtel Dieu. After all, it is but a small fraction of a people that incites insurrection and cries for blood. The majority vastly prefer to tread their accustomed rounds.

But though the tumult of the evening before had subsided and the wild red bonnets had departed to their rowdy bivouac by the Seine, the hush, the comparative desertion of the streets, were all too ominous. There was activity enough under cover, as every one knew. The theaters were crowded with communists, the convents with the plotting Jacobins, who had brought up these wild men of the South to screw the courage of a good-natured people to the sticking-point, the assault on the king. And the legions were drilling on the plains, while, in the courtyard of the palace, Mandat was deploying the six thousand defenders of the crown. Only on necessary errands, therefore, did orderly citizens venture on the streets. The more cautious were beginning to draw their bolts. And the market-women and shopkeepers waiting on their few customers kept their ears cocked for the return of those marching feet.

Napoleon, of course, would have ventured anywhere, and he was about, though his promotion had come and he should have rejoined his regiment. But discipline in the Revolutionary armies was none too strict, and his self-assurance had hitherto got him out of all scrapes. Big things were about to happen in Paris. He would stay a while and await the drama.

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He had on this morning a slight duty, too, to which he must attend. It was Laurette Permon's birthday; and even in troubled times, young ladies set great store by such occasions. So after much gazing in shop-windows and bargaining with shopkeepers for a gift that would not proclaim too loudly the state of his purse, he presented himself at the Permons' in his new captain's uniform, which had brighter insignia on the shoulders and a trifle more of fancy buttonhole work on the broad rolling lapels.

He found Madame Permon in a state of great distress. She had always been subject to palpitations; but never, she complained, had her heart been so tremulous as now.

“A man,” she said, “has been searching this house! And who do you think it was? An odious upholsterer, Thirion. He solicited my trade a few weeks ago, and when I told him I had a man who did over my chairs beautifully, he flew into a rage and vowed vengeance.

“An hour ago he came back, declaring he had an order for search given by some commune or club of his. He called it a ‘domiciliary visit.’ And he went through everything, my dear Napoleon, everything! Snooped through my boudoir; turned over mattresses, even my most intimate apparel.”

Then, seeing Napoleon's quizzical look, and nettled by it, she added with increased dignity: “I see you think we submitted ignobly! Monsieur showed the heart of a lion, I assure you. He held his pistol at the ruffian's breast; for which brave act this Thirion threatens to throw him into La Force.”

Napoleon glanced at the bewildered botanist, who held the ancient horse-pistol quite gingerly, looking not at all

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like a lion, then exclaimed: "It is an outrage. Law-abiding citizens should not be subjected to insult and search!"

Here Napoleon took Monsieur Permon and Albert aside.

"You have been blind to events. You can at least see to what these 'domiciliary visits' point: search on the slightest pretext, arrest on a miscreant's word, decent people carted off to the Temple, then—God knows what! I shall see that you are not arrested this time, my old friend; but be cautious. Treat tradesmen civilly; do not express opinions too openly; and be careful whom you entertain. Above all do not go out on the streets to-night!"

Laurette stopped him on his way to the door.

"I think you might have said something to comfort my mother," she said with asperity. "Your words and manner only increase our alarm."

"Shocks are good for palpitations," he returned. "Did you not see how she bridled when she thought I reflected on the bravery of the Permons? Stop dancing on the volcano's crest and show more steel yourself! Your old friend, my mother, would. So should the blood of a Greek princess.—There! you are angry too. That is better. *Au revoir*, and tell your mother I shall see that you are not troubled."

What basis there was for this confident assurance, Napoleon did not know himself. But he would do something for his friends; and he knew that this Thirion held out at the Comédie Française, where his Section met. Thither, as night came on, and the crowds once more began to swarm in the streets, he made his way, there to confront one of the leaders whom, through his rambles about Paris, he knew by sight.

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The theater was in an uproar. On the stage sat the leaders of the Section, and most of them were not very prepossessing. It was like bearding the lion in his den. Nevertheless he made his way to the stage and drew the man aside.

“Citizen,” he said, “I am an officer and am loyal to the Revolution. I protest an insult to good friends of mine. They have been subjected to search; yet they have hidden no one. To this I pledge you my word.”

The conspirator was at first a little angered by the plea; but Napoleon’s cool assurance impressed him. Probably, too, he felt better-natured than usual because of the progress of the great plot hatching all over Paris, and the good news he knew the tocsin would soon ring.

“At once,” as Napoleon later reported the incident in a letter to his mother, “this fellow ordered the boor Thirion to desist. But your friends, the Permons, took it as casually as they did my trinket for Laurette. Yet, under the conditions, I risked my life.”

The rarity of gratitude in this world and the inconstancy of friends seemed also to be contributing to his disillusionment. In his heart he longed for affection, delighted in helping his friends. It was part of his code ever to be loyal to them. In this consciousness, he could not understand why his brothers and his associates were continually taking issue with him. Such remarks as Bourrienne’s about his poverty and criticism by the Permons cut him to the quick. And he could make no allowances for them, since he could not observe his own manner, occasionally winning, but too often imperious and harsh. Further, if a young man sees more clearly than his friends what is best for them, it usually follows that they do not see straight

He Buys a Birthday Gift for a Young Lady

enough to recognize the fact, and quite naturally resent the assumption.

In short, the young lieutenant, or rather captain, was in a way of becoming not only disillusioned but disgusted with human nature, of which he was to see more, and in the raw, that night.

CHAPTER VI

The Attack on the Tuileries

HE did not go to bed; indeed few in Paris except the little Dauphin and children of his age closed their eyes. The heat was intense, but it was something else that stayed the whole city from slumber. Every window was open, every shutter flung back, to admit the fugitive currents of air that might steal down from the close heavens and to permit a glimpse of events. The chandeliers of the palace, the sacred lights in the convents, tapers in every attic, were agleam, so that the whole town shone as though for a festival.

There was plenty of illumination, therefore, for Napoleon, when he left the wrangling communists in the theater to make his rounds. Intensely interested in his profession, he analyzed every military situation, even though he was but a spectator. As hypothetical commander, first of the attacking forces, then of the defense, he decided where he would have placed his cannon, his barricades, how disposed his troops. It might have been better if the procrastinating king, pacing back and forth under the chandeliers to escape the taunts of his queen, had leaned out of the window and called the young man in.

The riding-academy was now dark. The chaotic Assembly had dispersed on a pretext, leaving the crown to its

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fate. The National Guard had been suborned; the City Hall would be seized, the palace stormed. It only awaited the hour and the tocsin. Then from the bridges over the river, by way of the Louvre, from the rue St.-Honoré, back of the riding-academy and the Convent of the Feuillants and from the gardens, they would come, the marching columns, the men of the *faubourgs*, the wild men of Brittany and Marseilles.

Over the palace forces, Napoleon observed, hovered an air of indecision. Through the lofty lighted windows he saw the white head-dresses and shoulders of the ladies in waiting, the wigs and neck-cloths of the gentlemen. It was significant—only heads, heads without bodies, floating distractedly to and fro. This dramatic foreshadowing, however, did not interest Napoleon so much as the *élan* of the troops. The militia ranged in the garden of the palace slouched listlessly on their muskets; those on the bridge-head of the Pont Royal, the only approach by way of the river, surlily obeyed commands; and the cavalry by the rue du Louvre, a few hundred yards to the east, seemed similarly disaffected.

Here, at the corner of the Long Gallery, which ran parallel to the Seine, at right angles to the Tuileries, and connected that palace with the Louvre, he heard the rip of saw and the scrunch of wrenched planks. He mounted the high step of an old house. They were tearing up the floor so that the attackers could not rush the Tuileries by the Long Gallery after they had gained the Louvre. But the gap was only six feet. It could be leaped!

Napoleon made his way toward the main entrance of the palace, approaching it from the Carrousel. Again from a place of vantage, he could see those within the

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courtyard—an indifferent array of mounted *gens d'armes*, a few lines of gentlemen still loyal to the king, and the phlegmatic, red-coated, horn-hatted Swiss Guards. They lounged on benches, squatted on the steps of the Grand Staircase. Suddenly they jumped to their feet, stood at attention, and presented arms to a violet coat—the king. He seemed to be addressing them perfunctorily, now and then looking for his cue from some one; and Napoleon could see the bottom of a petticoat farther up the stairs. The petticoat descended—the queen. She spoke to them with condescension, yet, it was evident, with some kindling fire.

It was past midnight now, and, feeling hungry, Napoleon deserted the scene for coffee at the Palais Royal, only a few turns away. But scarcely was he seated when he heard a report from a cannon over by the Pont Neuf. The dance of death was on; and leaving his cup untasted, he hurried back to the Carrousel and pounded at the door of Bourrienne's brother, who kept a sort of genteel pawnshop and warehouse there. Admitted by his alarmed host, in breeches and nightcap, he looked down from the window on the palace court. The redcoats were in ranks now, stiff as though cut from cardboard, the troopers in their saddles equally immobile. Then suddenly there broke upon the night the deep booming of bells—bells—bells—from the Convent of the Cordeliers, L'Abbaye, St.-Gervais, Notre Dame—all the bells of Paris, those tocsins which for centuries had sounded the alarm of foes without and were sounding it now for those within its walls. For hours their silver, brazen, iron clangor vibrated on the air while lights burned brightly in casement and tower; heads leaned from the windows; thousands of expectant citizens listened in

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the streets and a little family trembled in the palace—and still those marching legions did not come.

Then the eastern sky began to pale; the lights in the city faded and went out. Crimson and golden banners, as though for a king's delight, shot, trembling over tower and pinnacle, straight to the zenith above the palace, and the sun came up, red and glowering. Napoleon looked at his watch, the one the old archdeacon had left him. It was half-past four.

The bells had now died down, to be succeeded by other sounds that with soldiery accompany the dawn—the clink of accoutrements, the call of the bugle, the ring of horses' hoofs on the stones; and then, more ominous—the constant shuffle of feet, the cries of crowds debouching into the squares and choking the narrow streets near the palace until the gates almost bulged in. Stiff and straight the redcoats confronted them. Gamins, climbing the walls of the court, jeered and threw stones; then, like boys diving from a bank, they jumped, half jubilant, half scared, as from afar they heard the thunder of the now advancing columns.

The queen turned from her window. With her own hands she bathed the Dauphin, so hastily that the soapy water ran in his eyes and he cried. Then she dressed him, and went to summon the drowsing king. He had fallen heavily across the bed, lay with mouth open, breathing stertorously—snoring, any one but a courtier would have said. Usually he had not been without dignity; but he utterly lacked it now, as the queen shook him violently, and cried: “The troops are waiting. Go review them. *Sacré!* Wake up and show yourself a man!”

He did as he was told. Napoleon, who had now left

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Bourrienne's and had worked his way to the Terrasse des Feuillants, adjoining the riding-academy and north of the palace, saw the king come down the steps and pass before the massed troops, his clothing still unadjusted. His hose were wrinkled, his embroidered waistcoat unbuttoned; and the wig above his violet coat slumped down on one side, flattened from contact with the pillow. More than ever the muscles of his heavy body showed a lack of coördination. As he plodded along, he tried to keep his head up, but rarely looked into the soldiers' eyes. He was confused, flushed, wanted to get out of it all. The rabble massed on the terrace outside jeered; guardsmen snickered. Over the wall snicker and catcall met, established a dangerous *entente*.

"He has made himself ridiculous; he is lost!" exclaimed Napoleon to himself. He had no love for the king; but a well timed gesture, he knew, was worth several battalions, and he hated an impotent one as much as he hated a poor maneuver. "If only he had shown himself on a horse!"

Then when the violet coat and flattened wig had disappeared within the west entrance of the Tuilleries, a cry ran through the crowd. The City Hall was in the possession of the commune! The National Guard had gone over to the people. "*Ca ira*. It is here. At last we shall get on!"

A group of ministers came from the Assembly, which shortly after midnight had been reconvened, and went into the palace to confer with the king. Their advice was by no means impartial, and the conference was short. His Majesty reappeared, followed by the Dauphin, whose little gangling figure somehow suggested the incompetence

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of his more portly father. The child held his mother's hand and kicked the strewn leaves. Louis mopped his brow.

"It is midsummer," he said; "yet already the leaves are falling."

Contemptuously silent was the queen. She could have thought of fitter subjects than the weather. And she had no trouble in keeping her head up, while anger flamed in her cheeks. She was tender only with the child whose hand she held. So the group passed within the porter's lodge of the Assembly, never to come back to that royal garden.

But now some one within the courtyard had fired, the opening shots; and with it Napoleon wormed his wiry body through chinks in the crowd, back to the Carrousel. As he went, the first report was succeeded by others, then quick volleys, the crisp crackle of echoes rattling from the old houses far up and down the streets. With difficulty he gained a position near the courtyard, facing the main entrance. One of his stature but of less determination would have been trampled underfoot; for at last the men of the Sections and the South had arrived. Like a flood bursting sluice-gates, they had broken into the courtyard, sucking in the unarmed mob with them. The Swiss and the few poor gentlemen and the servants who had elected to die for the king were falling back; now up the entrance steps, then the Grand Staircase; retreating, loading, firing, falling. There were splashes of bright color on the stones, the brilliant scarlet of torn coats, the darker crimson of pools that welled from them. But these were soon hidden by the swirling crowd of loafers, guttersnipes, and armed attackers that leaped

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up the steps, up the Grand Staircase, and went careering through the great halls; while from river, *quai*, and gardens, other columns came on in a frenzied double-quick; and still others could be seen racing down the long corridors of the Gallery of the Louvre. Past the windows within, they ran—red bonnets, muskets, and pikes, eager to be in at the death.

For hours, it seemed to the pitying there, hunters and hunted raced up the stairs, through pavilion, bedchamber, and hall, the cellars and royal chapel, and into the attics where scullions cowered under the eaves. It was a mad scramble that would have been fantastic, had it not been so horrible. Bedclothes were smeared with blood; the staircases dripped it. Servants hiding up chimneys were pulled down by their squirming legs and disemboweled; cooks were boiled in their own caldrons; and half-naked prostitutes reveled on the stained coverlet of the queen's own bed.

Glutted with blood, the mob now sought for wine; broke again into the cellars; drowned lackeys in tuns; then drank the wine in which their victims perished. Others staggered up to throw bottles from the windows; even above the uproar the crash of glass could be heard. Gilt clocks followed; statues, and rosy Cupids pried from the ceiling; then naked bodies that did not chip into fragments, but thudded sickeningly on the stones. In the gardens boys were using heads for footballs, women toasting ears on chestnut-braziers, and over all, the feathers from a thousand saber-ripped mattresses fell like snowflakes, blithely, airily, only to stick and clot in the stains on ledge and cornice, or to deck fantastically the limp red coats.

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So the morning sun blazed into high noon, descended; and twilight fell. Night could not draw the veil. The chandeliers still shone brightly in the palace; sky-rockets rose in fiery arcs from the bridges; and tongues of flame licked at the piles of dead in the courtyard.

A frenzied musician began to play the chapel organ. The strains of the “*Dies Iræ*” floated out into the court. To its holy measures chains of men and women danced ring-a-rosy around the burning piles; and the mad procession still ran through the galleries. One could see them on every story—now massed bands of assassins, honest artisans gone mad, then stragglers; a butcher in a lady’s chemise—a headless corpse astraddle a *sansculotte*’s shoulders—a fisherman with one of the king’s wigs, the pigtail over his nose, and he feebly batting at it—a naked woman running, the mark of a red paw on her white breast. Such were the patriots that streamed by the serene windows.

There was no escaping it; one could not look away. If one did, the flames threw shadows—mocking, capering, demoniac shadows on the walls; revealed the figures massed on the bridges and on the boats, leaning from attic windows, bending down from the housetops. And their faces, the very frozen stillness of their attitudes, would have told the horrors of the night.

Meanwhile through all this the young captain, Napoleon Bonaparte, moved, horrified, revolted, but not afraid. A surgeon had once told him that his heartbeat was remarkably low. He was not one to grow dizzy in high places or to be frightened at carnage. But there are two kinds of carnage—that necessary to a battle-field, and this!

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A crowd of men met him, carrying something aloft on a pike.

“Salute!” they cried.

There was but one thing to do. Coolly and calmly he saluted.

He saw a red bonnet about to stab a Swiss. Quickly he seized the man’s wrist.

“Comrade, you are from the South?”

“*Oui, Monsieur le Capitaine.*”

“I too. So, man of the South, let us spare this wretch!”

The sword did not fall. To great man or murderer he knew how to make an appeal.

Snatches of song came to him:

Allons enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!

Was this then glory, this then the Revolution?

In retrospect one might answer that these maniacs made up but one fiftieth of the population; and that these, maddened by the sights of that night, the fear of the invading armies not far from Paris, or of traitors within, had run amuck. And fifty times their number wept and deplored it, as they huddled in closets, or looked down from the housetops. But all this was not so apparent then. The reeling brain would have sworn all Paris engaged. Besides, since Napoleon’s brain did not reel, he would have had another answer ready: no one had stopped it; no one was strong enough. This *was* the Revolution; and *he* himself would ride the red tide.

So on through the night he passed, pitying, revolted, yet calmly outlining what he would have done, how

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checked this mob, how broken it, how bent it to his will. Never for one instant was he in a panic ; his mind worked with clock-like sureness. It would have indeed been well for the king that day, had he leaned from his window and called the young man in.

It was after the September massacres, which matched in violence this fateful August night, that Napoleon escorted his sister, Marianne Elise, from the school at St.-Cyr, made his way to Marseilles, thence by boat home.

The sister and brother did not have much to say to each other on the way down. He was absorbed ; and for escort she might easily have preferred another young man. Still she was ready enough to rave over her best hat which Napoleon had snatched from her head and crushed under his heel. But his ruthlessness was only a ruse, for that white plume had been like a red rag to the mob in Marseilles. None the less it was her *only* good hat ; and she would not let him hear the end of it until he silenced her with a look that even the headstrong Marianne must heed.

Letizia was, of course, glad to see them ; but she was not altogether happy.

“Only five months away,” she said, gazing at Napoleon with her fine dark eyes ; “yet you are changed, my son.”

CHAPTER VII

The Townspeople Drive Letizia Out

THE blow Letizia long expected had fallen at last. She must leave her home, the house on the via Malerbe.

In the heart of winter the king had been killed, dying rather bravely for a good-natured incompetent fellow; and spring had come again—in spite of massacres and Reigns of Terror.

Wistfully, through these weeks, Letizia had watched peach and almond, lemon and cherry, break into pink and white, the mimosa into gold. With a fierce thirst she had drunk in their fragrance, mingled with the scent of juniper and rosemary, arbutus and myrtle, coming down from the hills—for the last time, she felt.

She had not been altogether happy in this house, for the handsome Carlo had had his troubling instabilities and, too, his downright infidelities. That he had other children besides the thirteen she herself had borne, there was good reason to believe. From here she had gone forth to war with him, in the saddle over the hills; and, since his death, had known the bitterness of poverty. But it had been her home for many years. And it was hallowed by a thousand associations, of the children, the old arch-deacon, of birth and death and toil, vital experiences which strike roots deeper than any existence of mere luxury, comfort, or freedom from care.

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And now they were coming to drive her out, with her sons away, Joseph south, Napoleon on an expedition against Sardinia, and Lucien at Toulon. They never should have let him go. For Lucien had let his tongue wag again, this time with disastrous results. In his fieriest harangues yet, at Toulon and Marseilles, he had denounced the beloved leader Paoli. This was the last straw. Since the Bonapartes were so enamoured of France, said the Ajaccians, there let them go!

Resistance, Letizia knew, was hopeless. Nevertheless she had outlined a plan for defense worthy even of her second son, and, to carry it out, summoned every hand she could from the farms at Bocognano and Melleli. But Fesch and Cousin Ramolino had tried to dissuade her. And there were the children. So, resolute yet wavering because of them, she drew bolts and bars, this May night, saw that the men were sentineling terrace and doorways; then for a moment stood watching the stars above the belfries of San Giovanni Battista, the last petals falling in the gardens, and listened for footsteps, hoping her sons would come.

Later, she undressed and fell asleep, to be awakened, about ten o'clock, by a light violently flaming over her pillow. It was a torch of fir held by a bronzed arm; and in the orange and soot-black fumes she saw that the room was filled with armed men. But their faces, though fierce, were very friendly.

"Signora Letizia," said the holder of the torch, "rise quickly! In the woods are armed bands coming for you. You have in us a faithful escort. We will take you safely over the hills."

"Would you have me run away, Cousin Costa?" asked

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the widow intrepidly. "The Ramolini, men and women, defend their homes to the last!"

"But the little ones, signora! Think of them."

It was of them that she had been thinking all the past week as she waited; and now she bowed her head resignedly.

"You are right, Cousin Costa; and if you will withdraw, I will make ready."

The dark faces and torches filed out; and quickly she dressed herself and, with Saveria's aid, the younger children, Caroline and Jerome. These she despatched with two of the men to the house of Fesch; then, taking a few handkerchiefs and stockings and changes of linen for herself, Marianne, Louis, and Pauline, with the three she stole out of the door and past the cathedral to the gates. Awed by the fierce demeanor of her escort, the warders let them through, and they made for the hills back of the town. Now, for fear of pursuit, the torches had to be put out; and they stumbled upward, over rocks and gullies. Their long dresses were torn by thorns and cactus, and they blundered against tree-trunks, smiting their foreheads in the dark.

All night they wandered over the hills, descending, just before dawn, to the shore of the gulf opposite Ajaccio, where they saw a cluster of hovels and towers cutting dark segments out of the purple of the sky. It was Capitello; for the time at least, they were safe.

An hour passed without a sound, save for the lapping of the waves, the cry of night-birds wheeling around the towers, and an occasional shot from the far-off city, where the candles of early risers began to twinkle.

At last oar-locks creaked over the water; a boat grated

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on the shingle; and a short figure muffled in a greatcoat jumped on the shore. It was Napoleon, who had escaped from the bands sent out by Paoli to arrest him, by disguising himself as a shepherd. He was once more in uniform, having changed at Bastia, which he had reached safely, he told them; and then, on hearing of his family's peril, had secured boats.

"At once," he said, "I made for the *quai* of Ajaccio and sent a messenger to Cousin Ramolino's house. He said that you were heading for Capitello, and thither I sailed. And now let us embark. We go to better things! —This way, Signora Mother."

They rowed to the lugger and boarded it, and as they rounded the point and, turning northward, skirted the coast, Letizia stood, an indomitable figure, on the starboard side. A little way inland, two pillars of smoke columned to the sky, and, below these, flames rose and fell like variable fiery fountains. It was their farm-buildings at Melleli; and an unheeding bystander remarked:

"Your home on the via Malerbe, too, is doomed, captain. I saw it being sacked. They had broken in the doors and were carrying out furniture and bedding into the street."

"Quiet, rascal!" said Napoleon sternly. "Do not distress her further." Then aloud, waving his hand at the shore: "That is the past. There"—he pointed to the north—"lies our future. Let us be cheerful. Come, signora, up with it: a *Vive la France!*"

And "*Vive la France!*" cried Letizia bravely, though she had never cared much for that country. In the darkness none saw her lips tremble.

So she exchanged her home for a heaving deck and

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a country equally unstable. There was a stop of a few days at Calvi with some relatives, another at Bastia, where Fesch and the youngest children and, later, Joseph joined them; then with her brood Letizia covered the hundred miles of open water that lay between the island and Provence, to arrive at Toulon on June 12, 1793, weary, destitute, and hungry.

Here they were met by Lucien, who had come down to the wharf to meet the arriving packet; but though he had been for some time in the town, he did not help them much. He could shiver an oratorical lance most gallantly, but it was beyond him to nose out the best lodgings that could be had in the town for a few sous a day. Besides, he was rather miffed that his brothers did not appreciate that speech that had dispossessed them. What was a roof, anyway, when there was the free air of liberty all around them?

“Can you not get some sense in your head?” said Napoleon, there on the *quai*. “There is a time for everything; and it was no time at all to let loose that bombast. Hereafter you await word from me!”

Joseph too, though more mildly, unbraided him for his lack of caution; and that speech had been the *chef d'œuvre* of his young life—his nineteen years. He fancied himself now a noble Roman of the Cause. And when his mother pressed her inquiries about lodgings, addressing him as Lucien, which was not unnatural seeing that she had so had him christened, he bewildered her by requesting her to call him “Brutus” in the future. At this Paulette giggled and Napoleon swore; while Marianne, a self-possessed girl, at times almost as imperturbable as her second brother, retorted:

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“We’ll call you anything you want, if you’ll only get us a place to sleep and something to eat.”

Letizia, however, looked at him wonderingly, but tenderly none the less. What had got into the boy’s head? Had he suffered a sunstroke or had the revolutionary horrors of this miserable France driven him mad? But Lucien had stamped off, enraged at the snickers. For a week he was in the sulks and vouchsafed them few glimpses of his handsome Greek-coin profile.

Meantime he had left them on the *quai*—eight-year-old Jerome in his little bobtailed coat; Louis, almost fifteen now, the bass beginning to render husky his boyish treble; Caroline, eleven, the thirteen-year-old Paulette, and Elisa, just passed sixteen, in their quaint gowns, limp and outmoded in the swift-changing fashions of those years; Joseph, twenty-five, trying to look the grave statesman; and Napoleon, younger by a year but years older in wisdom, his greatcoat now his only luggage. In the center stood the usually amiable Fesch, a slight frown of bewilderment and discomfort disturbing his broad radish-hued face, and that indomitable woman, their mother, her dark eyes fronting haughtily and yet sweetly the *sans-culottes*, sailors in abnormal trousers, fezzed Turks, and lascars brown as boiled chestnuts, that stared at her from the piles of barrels and powder-kegs, coiled ropes and jutting bowsprits. Here they were, a curious group, like so many immigrants, come up to this troubled country—no one, save Destiny, knew why—strange entry on the stage on which they were to take a not inconsiderable part!

Napoleon, however, unlike Lucien, let no time lag. He had left on his brother’s heels, to return in a short time

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and convey the group to a house in the suburb of La Vallette, kept by a widow named Cordeil, who, with some haggling, agreed to let them in, thus establishing, though she knew it not, her only claim to fame.

After seeing them settled, the three girls in one tiny bedroom, Letizia and Jerome in another, with Fesch not far off, Napoleon checked Louis off by diligence to the military school at Châlons, Joseph to Paris with Napoleon's plan for the subjugation of Corsica. Under any conditions this campaign would have been sound; but undoubtedly his umbrage at his mother's harsh treatment gave it greater clarity and succinctness. Joseph was to present this to the Provisional Council at Paris; and off he went, to study it en route in the post-chaise and to be convinced by the time he presented it that it was three quarters his own devising.

Two of the boys gone, Napoleon now turned his barrage on Lucien. Here persuasion was more difficult, for Lucien had been spoiled both by the flattery of his women-folk and his older brothers' squelchings. Possessed of real, though scarcely rounded, talents, he was by way of being turned into a handsome donkey. And he did not relish at all that clerkship which Napoleon by hook *and* crook had secured for him in the commissary store at St.-Maximin.

"I have something better to do for Liberty," he protested, "than sitting on a wine-barrel, signing vouchers, and shooing rats!"

"Sometimes I think you are a fool, Lucien," Napoleon retorted. "You cannot eat your words—though, by the gods, you ought to eat that speech of yours—yet you

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protest the thousands francs a year that I have secured for you. I got no more as a *sous-lieutenant*, but I made it stretch to cover even your follies."

The upshot was that he kicked the boy out—metaphorically, of course, though he was longing to place an actual boot in the thin seat of Lucien's breeches—and sent him off to his shooing of rats and signing of vouchers on a wine-barrel. Thus, having deployed his forces, the young captain himself departed, after depositing in Letizia's hands what he had left of his francs, to rejoin his regiment, now stationed at Nice. That he was again somewhat overdue did not disturb in the least a very practical, though by no means atrophied, conscience.

Letizia stayed with the slatternly Cordeil widow a scant four weeks; then, seeing from her dormer the Spanish, English, and Neapolitan fleets sail into the harbor, to help the good folk of Toulon in their capricious revolt against the Assembly (now the Convention), she took up her wanderings once more.

With Bausset, Cadière, Miouacc, she quickly became acquainted, and with a long line of villages which she had never even heard of and, to tell the truth, did not much care for. Provence was fair as a garden of the Lord; the roads they traveled ran white among the hills and vineyards, and poppies flecked with crimson the golden wheat. But their crimson was all too symbolic; too often the grain was ungarnered; the roofs of the little white cottages fallen in; the wayside shrines desecrated; the church altars unlighted, their bells stilled. Altogether it was a pathetic hejira for the widow and her children.

And since they could not always afford a diligence and were only occasionally given a lift by a hospitable berlin,

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the journey was hard on clothes and boots. The clothes Letizia mended at night by candle-light in half-ruined cottages where the stars shone through, or in sinister inns where soldiers gabbled drunkenly on straw mattresses in the outhouses. Their shoes were repaired by cobblers in the villages through which they passed. There was also considerable renovation of spirit to which Letizia had to attend. For while Marianne, who was beginning to be called Elisa, showed much of her mother's spirit, Pauline—growing dangerously pretty now—was distressed over their shabbiness. Bumptious patches over the toes did not show off to advantage a foot which already she recognized as shapely. Caroline, too, was fretful, perhaps because she was undernourished; and little Jerome grew weary; and he cried out with leg-ache in the night.

Almost as much were Pauline's looks a source of worry, with so many upstart young officers about. Often the mother caught her, and sometimes Elisa, loitering by hedge-rows and fences; and Paulette, she began to fear, showed herself one of the light sort that would flirt with a handsome lackey when there were no gentlemen about. So Letizia's fine eyes, though they lost little of their brilliance, grew heavy through exercise of this eternal vigilance.

At Marseilles, where they took lodgings in the rue Pavillon, the proud Elisa grew depressed. It was not so much that each day the tumbrils rolled down the Cannebière with their loads of trembling victims. Youth might feel a moment's pity, then forget. But a young lady could not forgive having to stand in a queue, day after day, at the Municipal Bureau, with a lot of beggars and snarl-

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ing fishwives, to present a ticket for a loaf of bread. It was all Napoleon's fault, she declared, *not* Lucien's. Napoleon had ruined her best hat and now had sent her to the bread-line.

As she stormed in from her first long wait, breathless with indignation and climbing stairs, Fesch quite agreed with her. Not only was Napoleon a flea; they were all fleas, compelled to jump from one hovel to another. He had set them all doing it.

“Surely,” he continued as he took a turn of their meager apartments, then watched the cocked hat across the street shoving his victims into the cart—“surely Cæsar, Augustus, Charlemagne, or those ‘Plutarch’s men’ occasionally were still. Once in a while they sat on thrones, issued laws, or slept in their palaces. If this nephew of mine is, as he fancies himself, a second Cæsar, why does he not get somewhere, stay somewhere, issue his mandates from a throne, hold levees, make laws under oaks—anything, so long as he leaves his family to sleep and eat in peace?

“Especially eat,” he repeated to himself, his head now feeling extraordinarily light; and Letizia, realizing this, forgave him except in so far as to ask:

“What did you expect, Joseph? If he realizes the dreams you speak of—and I am not admitting he has them—he will not be like any king that ever lived. On Monday he will be in Paris; on Tuesday, Vienna; the day after, in Milan.”

Not that she meant to make any such prophecy. She was at present more concerned with shoes and bread than scepters.—There was Joseph’s salary for example. He had just been appointed secretary to Saliceti, and it would

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be a good one. He had been a pretty good son too; and if only he would be as generous as Napoleon—the little “Nabulione”—what was it his father had said when he lay ill? “Come, where is the little Nabulione? Why does he not come with his big sword to defend his father?”

But Carlo had gone years ago, and the little Nabulione had grown up—she was forgetting—those tumbrils—the man with the cocked hat, the plumes, and the smirk—counting out his victims!—Oh, if that young girl across the street would not scream and shrink so!—Was her head, too, growing light?

CHAPTER VIII

Better Promote Him or He will Promote Himself

LIIGHT though her head might be, from horror and hunger, Letizia was clear enough in this characterization of her son: he would never leave them in restfulness and peace. Even in those dark years, already he was the energizer, the magnetizer of men, the indefatigable. And all who follow him, even to-day, must make forced marches, ride fast and far. If one dislikes that, one had better dismount at once and learn nothing more of our restless little captain.

He was trying his hand at energizing at the very moment of this October day of 1793, when Letizia and Fesch were talking about him in Marseilles and, far to the north, Marie Antoinette was turning her proud head on the scaffold to gaze for the last time at the Tuileries. Not that he knew this for some days thereafter, for there were then no heralds of the air glibly to announce:

“The Widow Capet approaches in the tumbril. It turns the corner. The crowd massed in the Place de la Révolution cheers. She sees the guillotine—shrinks back—recovers. She is nervous but in pretty good form.

“The cart reaches the foot of the scaffold, and she is

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assisted up the steps. For the ladies interested in the fashions we might say that she wears a white muslin gown, for obvious reasons cut quite low at the throat. She also has on a small linen cap and the daintiest of slippers. Her rouge is a trifle thick this morning to conceal her pallor; and her hair grayer than when we saw it last, over a year ago at the palace—why, it is almost white, though she is only thirty-eight!

“There, she is going to speak from the platform—thinks better of it and instead turns to look past the drawbridge of the old moat, over the walls and chestnuts of the Tuileries. It looks as if there were one or two late roses out—yes, we can see at least one. Apparently she sees it, too, or perhaps, above the trees, the windows of the palace. Those to the right, in the corner by the river-side, open from her old apartments. She remembers them, of course; but the Revolutionary Tribunal sits there now.

“But they have seized her, bound her, thrown her down. Her head is screwed down in the pillory under the knife. The features are suddenly distorted. Monsieur Sanson, the executioner, does not twitch; he seems quite cool and collected and goes, pleasantly grim, about his business. There are little details of this to which he must personally attend—see that her head is screwed down tight and far enough out for the knife; that her hands and feet are secured so that they do not twitch too convulsively.

“There, all right and set; he crooks his little finger—a flash of something in the sun—descending—a scream—groans—a cheer! Sanson is bending over; gropes for the forelock; is annoyed because the widow’s cap is in the way. He holds it up—this oval thing that once was a

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head, very beautiful too, every one said; but now the features are distorted, and the eyes stare so! That cap has slipped down over one. Comically? I would hardly say so; but frantically the people cheer. Hear the roar—up, on it goes, gathering volume, to *Notre Dame*, *L'Abbaye*, the *Butte*; and all the bells ring—ring while the blood drips through the cracks in the scaffold platform into the pit below. They have enlarged it recently.

“But now the show seems about over. They are throwing the once royal body into a basket—*plop*—in it goes like a recruit rudely tossed in a blanket. After it goes the head with the staring eyes. The wheels creak again—hear them? They are carrying the *Widow Capet* away. One might pluck that last rose from her garden and throw it in the basket; it would be a pretty sentiment; but it would mean only another head. . . . Creaking, creaking—hear them, those eternal wheels! . . .”

No, the young major, Napoleone di Buonaparte, did not hear the roar of that crowd as he stood by the guns of his battery, gazing through field-glasses down on the beleaguered city of Toulon.

Behind him rose the besieging mountains; on the lesser and descending hills were his own redoubts, cannon, and red-hot furnaces; below, the roofs, belfries, and open squares of the city, from which, faint and far, the bugle-notes came. There the red coats of the English were assembling, while a flotilla of boats transferred shot and powder-kegs to the *quais*. In the roadstead the azure and crimson banners of England, the scarlet and gold of Spain, flapped idly against an impenetrable maze of masts, cordage, and spars.

But it was no idle study that Napoleon was making.

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He was planning just where he could bring up another battery to advantage. The disposal of the guns was in his hands now, for since his promotion to *chef de bataillon* he was nominally second, actually first, in command of the artillery. And on his arrival he had found everything at sixes and sevens—a disordered commissary, grumbling soldiers, incapable sergeants, and worse generals—the sort one finds in all revolutionary armies, not so well fitted for the sword as the counting-desk, and not very good at that.

And how he had worked! under sun, moon, stars, and rain; despatched aides to Briançon and Grenoble for stores; ordered metal gabions for fortifications by the thousand from Marseilles; written to the Army of Italy for more cannon; and sent off dozens of letters to the ministry, who began to sit up and take notice of this meddlesome young officer.

And he had slaved with his men; slept with them on the ground in the torrential autumn rains; taught them how to load and fire the twenty-four pounders, to set gabions; and how properly to heat the cannon-balls and carry them without dropping them on their toes. Where the exceptional officer might be in two places at once, he was in five; everywhere solidifying, consolidating, restoring, magnetizing, and spurring on his men. For it is not only in the charge that the born commander is revealed, but also in the way he handles batteries and stomachs, and charms munitions and shoes out of the empty air. And his long hours of study by candle-light in the marshes of Auxonne, those silent reconnaissances of hypothetical military situations, told now fully as much as the battles in which he had been actually engaged. Told

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the more because he was not only fired by ambition but was, too, most enthusiastically and energetically engrossed in his job.

So he had put the besieging army in a high state of efficiency; that is, as far as the artillery went. His guns had been quadrupled in number, were all in working order, well manned, and disposed on every commanding height. He had even gone so far as to make a few pertinent suggestions about the infantry, though he would brook none from the infantry about the way he handled his guns. . . . But there were some of those fool foot-officers now; he could see their rooster-plumes dangling above a neighboring redoubt.

“Citoyen chef de bataillon,” said the boldest when they confronted him, pointing east of the town, “we think it advisable that you shell that fort.”

“You mind your own business and let me tend to mine,” he retorted brusquely. “It is the artillery that takes fortresses. The infantry but supports.”

And he turned his back on them; and somehow that back, frail though it was, had a most impregnable look. The rooster-plumes vanished in the woods.

But the morning was full of interruptions. And here was old Carteaux, the commander-in-chief. Painter before the Revolution, Napoleon called him “the Dauber,” though not yet quite to his face. Leagues of gold lace on his chest, he lumbered up.

“Citizen major,” he thundered, or tried to thunder, “post one of the batteries on yonder hill.”

“For what reason, general? As a decoration?”

“You are insubordinate!” spluttered old Carteaux. “That hill commands all the enemy forts.”

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“And they in turn command our battery. It would be silenced in five minutes.”

The gold mountain moved on. His junior was insubordinate, but, by the devil, he was useful! The battery was not placed on that hill.

Napoleon took up his glasses again and looked at the ships. Below the bulwarks of each were broad black bands with many apertures. From one of these apertures something spoke. A little white puff of smoke coiled and floated lightly away. A shell whistled through the air, landed at their feet, hurling a shower of sand on a young officer writing by the redoubt.

“Good!” said the young officer, as he blew away the particles of sand from the sheet of paper. “Now I shall have no need of sand!”

Dropping his glasses, Napoleon studied him—son of a plodding farmer, but full of fire, also of oaths, and very fond of pretty ankles and duels. The last qualities did not matter. But he was looking for young men with fire—was gathering them here and there.

“Lieutenant Junot,” he said, “run after ‘the Dauber’—if you can catch up with him,” he interpolated ironically as the barrage grew hot—“and tell him I want you for my aide.”

The fiery young farmer swore a joyous oath and embraced him on the spot. There had been other young men who had embraced him on the spot—Desaix, Muiron, Marmont, Victor—if he was in search of young men, these, scarcely younger than he, were also looking for a leader. They were strangely unobservant too, lamentably oblivious of externals. They did not appear to notice that this new chief of theirs was much smaller than they,

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and thin and frail; that his uniform was disordered, crumpled, and muddied from sleeping in the rain; that his locks were tangled; that spots of fever, also blotches caught when he had seized a ramrod from an infected gunner, disfigured his yellow face. They had caught something else—an intangible something—the note that vibrated in his word of command—so rapid yet so cool and collected, and more compelling than any orator of the tribune. Also they had glimpsed a pair of blue-black eyes that burned out of those splotched features—beautiful eyes and stern and piercing, holding all the joy of battle, yet ever far-seeing, calm and controlled. There are things, unseen, unheard, that more than trumpets stir the blood.

What was it he had said to each?

“Follow me, and we shall find paths of glory!”

Ever to statesman or assassin, subaltern or general, the ringing, the challenging, the *right* word!

So laughing and slapping each other on the back, they had sworn joyous oaths and vowed to follow him to the ends of the earth; that is, Desaix and Muiron had, and so did Junot now. Marmont and Victor, having the taint of Judas in them, as yet undiscovered, had been glib and not quite so joyous.

But while he spoke of “paths of glory,” the little major did not forget his guns. Perhaps he thought they would blaze the way to those paths, open them up. At any rate he was very busy sending shot and shell over the walls and on the decks of the black ships riding in the harbor, when the *comte*, now citizen, Barras, and Fréron, the two commissioners in charge of affairs in the South, called

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at his headquarters. Possibly he should have been there, but he wasn't.

"The little Captain Cannon," said the portly citizeness who kept the place, for that, despite his rank, was what the villagers called him, "you will find over there"—and she gave a vague sweep of the horizon. "He does not sleep; he does not eat. He is sick, yet he does not die. He is the little god!"

Napoleon from his guns saw them coming. He did not like them, reading their characters as much by his swift glance as by report. Barras he knew for a degenerate nobleman turned regicide, with all the vices of the old régime and none of its virtues but a courtesy which was too bland, covering his gifts for political intrigue, and a most marvelous technique for the seduction of frail countesses and cooks.

Fréron was worse. Sleek editor turned man of blood, though he had guillotined his thousands, he did not quite fit; and Napoleon suspected that his fanaticism was assumed; that he strutted in blood, waded in it, talked it, to curry favor with the Terrorists—it was very popular at the time. And he disliked his fox-like face, the man-of-the-world air he affected when away from the guillotine, his correct wig, his snowy jabot, and coral breeches. The breeches were not coral this afternoon; they were buff for the trenches. Letizia, however, had so described his appearance when calling at the rue Pavillon. There was the rub. To his mother's consternation, this Stanislas Fréron had turned suitor for Pauline's hand. And Napoleon, though he loved Pauline more than his other sisters, was beginning to fear that she was both passionate and light. And despite his forty-two years

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and blood on his hands, Stanislas, had a way with him.

Nevertheless they were commissioners, in power; the only instruments at hand. These facts, being unafraid and a fatalist to boot, he considered more than the guillotine. He would use them now, later on find a way to circumvent Fréron's attentions to Pauline.

As the three met by the guns, Barras glanced at his companion in amusement. Muddied uniform, tangled locks, blotches! A trifle bedraggled for flight he thought the plumes of this young man, this strange John the Baptist they had come out to see. His lips twitched once—not twice, though, for Napoleon's glance had met his. . . . Perhaps, after all, they were on the right scent.

At once their host plunged into an explanation of the disposition of his batteries, also of his grievances. No qualms had he about criticism of his superiors. The besieging army was being crippled by incompetents. Fuddlers would not let him carry out his plans. They should put in some one who would act, not strut about in gold lace—though these he did not indicate by name.

Concentration was then his theme—a favorite with him. In a siege one must envelop, to be sure; but one must not scatter one's forces too far along the line. Attack at one point!

Below them lay a fort held by the Spanish and English, a few hundred feet from the battery and not far from the besieging ships.

“Strike there, citizen commissioners,” he said, “if you would take Toulon. That fort captured, the fleet retires, and Toulon falls!” Then he added as the two shrank under the desultory fire: “It is to cover an attack on that

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fort that I have placed this battery so near. I had difficulty in manning it until I dubbed it the Battery of the Men without Fear. At once I had recruits enough."

So the two men of blood, the one with the haughty seigniorial air, the other with his snowy jabot, departed, a little more erectly than they had come, with that sarcastic comment ringing in their ears.

"He will do," said Barras, "but he will be hard to manage."

Though he did not hear this remark, Napoleon knew that he had impressed them.

"The fox and leopard!" he said to Junot, tweaking his ear in a rare good humor. "And do you know what they are saying? That they will *use* me. I will let them think so. It is the best strategy, though too subtle for you, my fire-eater." Then he frowned. "But Stanislas Fréron for a brother-in-law. . . . *Bah! No.*"

In a week he had encouraging evidence of the impression he and his representations had made. The dauber Carteaux left, and another commander, Doppet, took his place.

"Not so much gold lace," said Napoleon, "but quite as much the bungler"; then, when this Doppet for his opening gesture ordered an attack on the fort Napoleon had indicated to the two commissioners, "He has received his cue!"

The day set came, and through the morning Napoleon's barrages fell into the fort; with noon the advance sounded and the smoking guns stood still. At once the troops which had formed to the rear of the batteries charged down the hill, up another, and hacked their way through the palisades, gaining in quick order the enemy's second

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line of trenches. On the third the redcoats fell back, suddenly reformed, and, with bayonets, drove back the blues.

Still by the twenty-four-pounders of the perilous battery, Napoleon observed the turn of the tide and sprang on a gun-carriage.

“Citizen gunners,” he cried, “Men without Fear, let us not leave to the infantry the glory we have won with our guns. We ourselves shall take that fort!”

And leaping down, he led the way over the open ground, under a heavy fire, and gained the breach. The blue-coats, thus reinforced, now drove the reds back; but on the hills the drums suddenly beat the retreat, and back the blues tumbled.

Now Napoleon did not mind so much the bullet that had clipped him in the forehead, but he was infuriated by that order. Blinded both by rage and the blood from his wound, he sought out Doppet.

“Our blow has failed”—he hurled the insult straight in his commander’s teeth, there where he stood surrounded by his staff—“because a *bâtarde* has beaten the retreat!”

Again the right word; this was a camp language the gunners could understand. They cheered. The irresolute Doppet, too, understood, but said nothing.

With December came another general, after other conferences with Barras and Fréron—this time a bluff old fellow named Dugommier, and a soldier more nearly after Napoleon’s own heart—not quite, though, since no one could come up to Plutarch’s men, and while Napoleon paid tribute to many a comrade’s courage, he had scant respect for any strategy but his own.

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Still, Dugommier was sagacious enough to order another attack on that fort; resolute enough to keep the drums from beating any premature retreats. Toulon must be taken before the new year.

So, on the tenth of December, in a blinding rain-storm, the columns formed. Cannon-flares could scarcely be seen, and whole companies lost each other in the darkness; but sufficient gained the palisades to breach them and set the Spaniards and English flying. They fell back on the last defense, then raced headlong for the city. Napoleon, who with the gallant Muiron and old Dugommier led the attack, now brought up his guns and turned them, with those of the fort, on the ships at anchor.

Below, in the murk, though they could see neither sail nor mast, even by the light of the bombardment, he knew the ships were weighing anchor. Then suddenly he saw clearly enough, as magazine and powder-ship went up, lighting the town, the surrounding hills, and the harbor. Silhouettes struggled feverishly at the capstans and halyards, trying to heave up the anchors, to raise fluttering bits of topsail; and the *quais* were crowded with kneeling figures imploring the English sailors to take them away from *la guillotine's* vengeance. Their prayers unheard, they flung themselves into a sea as violently agitated from the explosions as any shaken by an earthquake.

For hours they saw these tiny silhouettes in the intermittent flashes; then dawn came, revealing the ships in a long-drawn-out queue far out at sea. By noon they had entered Toulon.

For a Christmas present, though in the Revolution they did not think so much of sacred festivals, they made Napoleon a brigadier.

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“Better promote him,” said old Dugommier. “If we don’t, he’ll promote himself!”

Which does not matter so long as he got that promotion. The steps had been slow and hard. They were coming faster now. In 1786 a *sous-lieutenant*; in ’91 a first; in ’92 a captain; major that fall; and now, with this new year of ’94 breaking, a general. Not so bad—a general at twenty-four! Things at last were looking up!

And so, with his comrades, Muiron, Junot, Desaix, Victor, and Marmont, he left for a new front, to take charge of the artillery of the Army of Italy. And still the letters that found their way to the rue Pavillon contained a goodly percentage of his increased salary. Pauline got her new shoes, Elisa that hat; and the whole family moved to better lodgings in the Hôtel Cipières. But Letizia did not spend it all. Though not exactly a prayerful woman, she gave thanks to God for their good fortune and put away most of the extra francs in an old stocking.

CHAPTER IX

He Stations His Guns about Paris

IT was a splendid take-off for an eagle's flight, this airy where now they placed him—the Alps all around like blue waves at their apex arrested; below, the storied cities of the shimmering Italian plain. But he had not been there more than a few weeks when they tried to leash him and send him to the guillotine.

Now, this was a strange reward for a man who had ranged up and down the coast building forts, reorganized the artillery, marched expeditions up the mountain passes, executed difficult diplomatic missions to Genoa, and despatched fleets against Corsica, even if these had been dashed in pieces by the English, for he was never lucky at sea. But possibly he had given too much advice. Certainly he had stressed his old idea of concentration, of massing troops and guns at a vital point. Two French armies operating on this front were jealous of each other; yet he had urged their union. He had even embodied his views in a letter which he gave to Augustin Robespierre, younger brother of the famous Maximilien, to carry to Paris.

“Once a breach has been made,” he wrote, “the enemy's power of resistance is broken. Strike at Germany first, and Italy, then Spain, will fall. The two armies must

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be joined with a common center and animated by the same spirit."

Sound, yes; but the commissioners saw in it only disloyalty. He was, said they, trying to break up the Army of the Alps. So they lodged him in jail at the foot of the Alps.

But a few feet of stone cell were too narrow for his bold spirit, that view of the storied cities and shimmering plain seen through the bars too enticing; and when, on the fourteenth day, they sent for him, he had his defense ready.

Around a hooded fireplace he faced the commissioners and a few fat generals and advanced upon them before they had a chance to strike.

"You have relieved me from duty," he said, "and ordered me under arrest without a hearing. Have I not, since the Revolution began, constantly shown myself loyal to its principles? Have I not taken my part in the struggle both against internal foes and, as a soldier, against the foreigner? I have sacrificed my home, everything, for the Republic. I served at the siege of Toulon with some distinction and with the army earned laurels at the siege of Saorgio."

Here he fixed his gaze on his old neighbor and chief betrayer, Saliceti, a sulphur-hued fellow with snaky locks and glittering eyes.

"Saliceti, you have known me for six years. What have you seen in me that is disloyal to the Revolution?"

In this defense was much of sincerity, for Duty and Self-Interest do not necessarily lie up different roads, despite brother Lucien. But this consciousness of right was not the only quality that impressed them. As one of

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the old generals—taller by two palms, a prodigious swearer, and a very mighty man—remarked: “I cannot understand it. He frightened me. His glance crushed me!” So they opened the prison doors and let him go.

In all these differences with the plumed incompetents of the French armies, this trying year, he had but one friend; that is, besides his fiery young men, who had only their swords and courage. And he was much criticized for his alliance with this man of power, Augustin Robespierre. He had joined hands, as the Permons and their like said, with Barras and Fréron, and now with the two Robespierres, men of blood, when he had no stomach for murder and little for vengeance. Indeed, when he came up to Paris, a little later, and found this same Saliceti, his betrayer, outlawed and hiding in the closet of his friend, Madame Permon, he let him go. Numerous, too, were the Royalists he at his own risk had saved. He was naturally conscious of this magnanimity, and the criticisms hurt. But to his resentment only once did he give vent, to Malmont, who had more sagacity than Junot and who had not yet shown the Judas stripes.

“Why can they not be practical?” he asked, as they strode back from one of his new forts in the rain. “The Revolution has been almost ruined by theorists. Every crowned head in Europe is massing his troops against us or intriguing with his spies within. They hate us because they fear Liberty will cross our borders into theirs. The Royalists are hatching plots, and many provinces have revolted. Firmness to the point of liberal executions is the only thing that will stop insurrection. It is no wonder that many have gone insane, that among others the innocent have perished. Better that a few of these die than

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that the Revolution fail. Not only France but the world would be the loser. Civilization would go back three hundred years.

“Take your Robespierre now—Maximilien I refer to—he would guillotine all who disagree with his theories; but, monster that he is, he has kept us together, put down revolt, held our armies with their faces to the foe. And none can deny that he is incorruptible. With all his opportunities he has enriched himself by not one sou.

“What the idealist calls casuistry, Marmont,” he concluded in disgust, “is sometimes nothing but common sense!”

But the Robespierres could help him no longer. They also were answering questions—questions more categorically put, by the august Revolutionary Tribunal at Paris, in the old apartments of the queen. That is, Augustin was trying to answer them. Maximilien had been a great talker; but he could scarcely mumble now, with his lower jaw shot away and the blood staining that faultless blue swallowtail and a jabot as snowy as Stanislas Fréron’s. But no answers ever satisfied these arbitrary judges, and next day the guillotine fell. The head with the stained bandage and broken jaw was held up to the cheering crowd; and the Reign of Terror was forever over.

The fair body of France had gone through many throes, these past five years, and in this Revolution, as in all, there had been three estates: that of the constitutionalists and States-General; then of the Assembly and half-measures; and at last of the extremists, the Convention and the Terror, when the men of iron and blood, assassins, fanatics, strangely and complexly motivated, but not all without patriotism, ruled. Now was to come the reaction,

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sadder still, that follows the agony, when peace is at hand, but a distorted peace, cynical and corrupt, and which has to mitigate it none of those fires of ecstasy which burn bright even as they shrivel and destroy.

The last spasm Napoleon himself was to see, when he reached Paris, in another May, 1795, with three of his young men, Marmont, Junot, and Victor—Desaix, Mui-ron, and Masséna, his latest recruit, having been left behind. Quite a band too, all nearly equal in age and matching their chief in mettle, if not in vision—paladins all, like those of Charlemagne. And their number was to be augmented by other youngsters who would travel with him the paths of glory. For wherever men were gathered together, his eyes were eagerly yet coolly watching, searching for new recruits.

Older men, too, he had allied to himself; and one, the austere Carnot, was to prove a valuable ally, shortly after his arrival, when Napoleon was ordered to Vendée, there to be transferred to the infantry. Now in those years, as to-day, the artillery looked down on the infantry; and Napoleon smarted at the demotion. So promptly he sat down in his lodging and wrote the War Department:

Many soldiers can direct a brigade better than I. Few have commanded artillery with greater success. I refuse to accept.

He was rather point-blank about it. Later he also excused himself as sick. There was considerable truth in the excuse. The fever bred by those cat-naps on the damp

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ground at Toulon and the acute skin disease caught from the infected gunner still troubled him. But neither fever nor wounds nor lions and wild horses would have kept him from going where he wished. This at present was to the Army of the Rhine, which was seeing action enough; and he presented the request to old Aubry, the minister of war, at the Luxembourg Palace. But the minister of war refused.

“You are young,” he said. “Let the older ones go first.”

Now, old Aubry was a desk soldier and had smelled but little powder besides that of salutes. “Cut him open,” said Napoleon afterward to Junot and Marmont, with whom he and Louis lodged in rue des Fosses Montmartre, “and you will find his bowels nothing but convoluted red tape.”

Perhaps old Aubry was not so incompetent as he seemed; even men of parts showed up poorly beside this masterful efficiency. But in any event Napoleon knew the old fellow had seldom been in action; so what he answered was quite to the point:

“One ages quickly on the battle-field; and I have just come from one.”

It might have gone hardly with him, had not Carnot, also Barras and Fréron, stepped in. And Barras could use him now. In this final spasm, the last the Revolution was to see, the Sections of Paris, angered at the new Constitution, planned to storm once more the Tuileries, where the new government sat. Barras was in command of the Army of the Interior and needed some one to handle his guns. The little meddler of Toulon was the man. True, Barras also appointed four other young generals to help take charge of events. But no one seemed aware of that.

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All government and populace saw and heard was the smallest of the five.

The situation was strangely reversed from that of August 10, three years before, when the city rose against the king. The attackers then were a ragged mob; now the rebels had thirty thousand well drilled guardsmen besides hastily armed Royalists and malcontents, and there were within the palace environs only seven thousand troops to defend the Convention.

But one man rather surprisingly changed these odds. On that August night, only as hypothetical commander, he made his rounds. Where before he had placed his cannon only in fancy, he disposed them with a dread actuality now. He had learned his lesson well.

But again there was a lack of guns. No time was to be lost, and he persuaded Barras to send a certain captain named Murat—the seventh of his young men—to Sablons for more cannon. A wise precaution, the government said, praising Barras!

For this messenger, young Captain Murat, was dashing, expeditious. Swiftly he returned with the guns, rattling over the cobbles of Paris. As swiftly they were placed, where Napoleon directed, on bridge-heads at the river, at the street intersections; at every point, in fact, he had picked out that night three years before.

In the morning the Royalist columns formed; but it was four o'clock before they struck. One could see them everywhere, their bayonets glistening far up the streets running north and south. From the windows, too, muskets protruded—as in the riots at Ajaccio. Paris was a bigger town, but that had been another lesson that could be applied on a larger scale. So never mind those forty-

He Stations His Guns about Paris

odd thousand, forty against seven. His guns were at every corner, pointing up the cross-streets and commanding the rue St.-Honoré, over which the rebels must come, from the Palais Royal, past the old yellow church of St.-Roch to the convents.

But now some one had fired, from a house or over a barricade. They were coming on—just a square away. He gave the word. Those guns, always obedient to their little commander, spoke once, twice, several times. Hundreds lay dead—the Royalist columns broke, ran, hid in the old yellow church, cowered under the blue painted sky and the white sculptured figures of its altar, or scampered off toward the Madeleine. Over the river, too, he had placed his guns well. There the rebels broke and ran quite as fast. A few minutes of fighting, and he was master of the situation.

So peace was restored. People grumbled for a little while, complained that Barras had wantonly killed his fellow-citizens. It was, said Barras, all Napoleon's fault. Soon they forgot to grumble. It was a good measure, after all. Now Barras said it was he, and not Napoleon, that had handled things so well. But it was too late. The word had gone the rounds. That young Corsican emigrant was a coming man!

Barras frowned. The meddler *was* hard to handle. Better win his support by promoting him again. On the tenth of October he persuaded the Convention to appoint this Bonaparte second in command of the Army of the Interior; on the sixteenth he was made a general of division; on the twentieth he took full command. Faster now. Indeed things were looking up!

And now he could have an extra uniform, a horse and

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carriage—two or three if he liked. These he had not desired as a luxury, but because, as he wrote Joseph, it would “enable me to go about my business with greater despatch.” And he moved from lodgings to a hotel of his own.

Nor did he reserve all his good fortune for himself. He bade Joseph see that “all the family are abundantly provided for. None must want for anything.” There was Lucien, for instance. He had made a fool of himself by marrying an innkeeper’s daughter because he was behind in his board bill and then had got himself in jail. Moreover the bride was going to have a baby. But he must be looked out for. There were many poor, too, now in Paris. He would distribute free bread.

Barras also had an idea, for which the time was ripe, he decided, after looking Napoleon over.

“You should enlarge your acquaintance, general,” he said. “Come to my salon. You will find there ladies of great beauty and charm—the fair Madame Tallien—the widow Beauharnais.”

The brusque young Corsican was to be launched in society.

CHAPTER X

A Brusque Young Corsican Is Introduced into Society

BARRAS soon confirmed his general invitation by setting a day. Also he made a remark, behind his hand, to his feathered confrères.

“That virgin in jackboots will prove tempting meat for the jaded palates of the ladies!”

And though most of the cynics in Paris, amusedly watching the young alien who had so suddenly burst on their view, laughed uproariously, Barras hit pretty near the mark. For if not exactly celibate, Napoleon was anything but a roué. Not conscience but rigid self-discipline and the wholesome strain of a primitive race had so far kept his conduct, for a soldier of that day, exceptionally correct. Junot, fiery son of Mars, could have sworn to this. Napoleon did not chide him for his indulgence; but never could Junot persuade his chief to go a-hunting with him. And browbeat women as Napoleon could and did in matters of business or of state, in matters of the heart he was curiously shy, also shyly curious about them, despite the brusquerie with which he hid his feelings.

In this state of mind, and arrayed in the full regalia of a commander-in-chief—blue coat with embroidered roll

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collar and gold-braided white lapels; the V of a pleated shirt, black cravat, and gold-tasseled epaulets; skin-tight white breeches, black boots knee-high, and a red and white sash around his waist, he presented himself at the house of the contaminated Barras.

It was an imposing L-shaped marble affair, with lofty classic windows and a stately flight of steps. As he hurried up these, he caught, through the wind-fluttered draperies, the gleam of bright lights, the clink of swaying pendants, and the musical lilt of women's voices.

That some of the ladies might be frail did not concern him. If frail, they would be lovely; and there would also be present those of undeniable virtue, fit helpmeets for a commander-in-chief. Revolutions make strange associates. And any one sprung from a race that had seen dark times with the Medici knew well the complexities of life. Even the most idealistic could not dwell in ivory towers, particularly in Paris.

Entering, Napoleon found the company divided into chatting groups around a gray-walled room hung with pink draperies, and lighted by chandeliers whose crystal chains like twinkling rosaries ran to the ceiling. In the adjoining room others sat at green baize tables, playing whist, *vingt-et-un*, or the new game of *creps*.

Barras, who now met the young general, was bravely attired in a black coat with lace collar, a white knee-length tunic with a blue sash running horizontally, a yellow one diagonally, across his breast. So, with a variation of cinnamon or violet, were the other directors—Rewbell, Letourneur, La Révellière, even that “lover of the truth,” the austere Carnot. Truly the men of the Revolution had blossomed out! Esthetically, this splendor

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did not greatly appeal to Napoleon, nor yet the pastel colors of the ladies' gowns, rose, *séa*-green, old ivory, the necklaces of pearls, the scarfs of delicate hue barely concealing their pink breasts. Yet in his present mood the femininity of it all was very alluring; also the thought—quite new to him—that a conqueror should have a court. That was an instrument hitherto overlooked.

But he was being presented—or rather, since he was the man of the hour, they were being presented—it was hard to tell which.

“Citizen Talleyrand”—*ci-devant* abbé, with a limp, and a face featured like a satirical sloth—also decidedly an air. The blue-black eyes marked him well. Here was a man he would need.

“Citizen Fouché”—Napoleon had heard of him—grown rich through fat government contracts—an egg-shaped head cut in at the jowls, and lids lowered like shutters over evil bloodshot eyes. A sandy-haired death’s-head, but the master spy of France! He must be watched, perhaps used.

And now Caulaincourt, the coral-breeched Fréron, a dozen others—and the ladies.

They had been gossiping about him.

“No wonder they call him Captain Cannon,” said one, she with the gold cincture. “He is stiff as a bristle of his ramrods. Actually one smells the powder!”

“Or hears the ‘Present arms!’” said a second—in sea-green—from behind her fan.

“Rather the call of bugles,” said a third, in diaphanous white, red shawl, and jet hair *à la Titus*. And since this was the “fair Cabarrus,” wife of Tallien, but mistress of Barras and ruler of this court, they stifled their laugh-

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ter. She had been familiar with many men—too familiar perhaps—but she knew a *man* when she saw him.

The widow Beauharnais—in lilac that revealed, but not quite so frankly, the soft undulations of her figure—had also a comment.

“You call him *gauche*. I call him extraordinary. What a beautiful head, and what piercing eyes!”

The first two smiled blandly. Josephine was “amiable, but she sheds her sweetness a little too uniformly over the world.”

“And now,” said Barras, “the victor must meet ‘Our Lady of Victory,’ Madame Tallien. Therezia: the conqueror of Vendemaire!”

Therezia’s eyes were at once compelling and complaisant. Despite her reputation, he liked her. Many were the heads her pity had saved from the guillotine.

“Then Madame Hamelin”—sprightly and highly scented—“Madame d’Hautefort”—“And you know the Permons?”—“Yes, for many years”; and remembering the criticism which Madame and Laurette had delivered, out of their impregnable virtue, on this social group, he smiled ironically.

“But you must meet your defender”; this from Madame Tallien; and he had the sense of some one—the one in lilac who had held a little aloof—being banteringly thrust at him though she did not at all lose her poise. He looked up: figure of exquisite grace, the bend of a neck, graceful, too, in every turn; light olive complexion, chestnut curls, and the largest and loveliest of dark blue eyes. The slightly irregular and not too white teeth—there were no good dentists in Paris—he did not observe. What would it have mattered anyway?

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“Surely of the old régime,” the thought flashed through him; “but one would not say, ‘Here is an aristocrat’; only, ‘Here is an adorable woman!’” It had come at last, the shaft. In the warm light of those eyes he felt his stern soldier heart melt.

“I have met you already, madame, through your son. But—ah, here are two chairs!”

And as in fancy he had enshrined her, so now he detached her from the smiling and amused group and— swift as always toward his objective—led her to the chairs that stood empty against the wall.

Startled by this directness, she could scarcely keep pace with him, but managed, as they took their seats:

“You were very kind to my son.”

“He asked for his father’s sword. It shall be sent, madame, at once.”

“A widow thanks you from the bottom of her heart. It is one of the few reliques I shall have of my husband. But it is of yourself we must talk. Tell me of your campaigns.”

“I cannot tell you here, madame. Where do you live?”—again straight to his mark. “May I have the honor of calling on you at your home?”

She raised her fan above her lips, parted now; then, over the little painted scene and ivory spokes:

“So soon, citizen general?”

“Soon! I have lost years. I know not the etiquette of court, but I would pay my respects. We are both aliens and from an island. We should know each other better.”

“Ah, citizen general, France does not treat aliens well!”

“She shall treat you well!” It sounded like an astound-

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ing promise; then his mouth, so stern before, broke into a smile.

“Why, his mouth is actually a Cupid’s bow,” she thought. “The man has charm, for all he sits so like a bit of Toulon on that *Louis Seize* chair.”

“You do not answer, madame. It is not here that we should talk, with all these sycophants about. *Allons donc*; tell me where you live. If you do not tell, I shall find out.”

“*Hé!* What determination! Very well, then; the rue l’Université, opposite the rue Poictiers.”

“To-morrow?”

“No, not to-morrow”—hurriedly—“I am moving to the rue Chantereine and have many engagements—Thursday.”

“Break them, madame. Thursday is five days off. Before then I may be on some battle-field.”

This was a master-stroke. It sounded pathetic in her ears. She relented, then rallied.

“You are rash, *mon général*. Even a commander-in-chief should know one does not storm a woman as he does a fortress.”

“Is the heart not then a stronghold to be stormed?”

Heavens! The man was getting on well—too well. And they said he was *gauche*!

“To-morrow?” he repeated.

“Please, monsieur, do not stare so. It makes one conspicuous.”

“You should be conspicuous—above all the world.”

So one just had to relent. Besides, he had caught Barras smiling at her with his proprietary air; and she had observed the general’s look of resentment, almost of hurt. In something of confusion, she replied, “Monday then,”

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adding lightly, “if you promise to talk of your battles, and not of *other* things.”

Through the streets, thronged with promenaders who had come out of their coverts to laugh and dance once more, now that the Terror was over, he walked blithely to his lodgings.

He was in love at last; he must take a wife. This idea was not so sudden as it seemed. He had given much thought to it lately. And his family had brought it home to him. For though he had succeeded in settling their fortunes, securing for Lucien a clerkship with the Army of the Rhine, a consulship for Joseph, an inspectorship of roads for Cousin Ramolino, a post as policeman for Ornano, also something pleasant for Uncle Fesch, with their matrimonial affairs he had had much trouble. Not only had Lucien made a *mésalliance* by marrying the inn-keeper’s daughter, who could neither read nor write, only multiply—that could not be helped now—but the giddy Paulette had fallen in love with the monster Stanislas Fréron—how Napoleon hated his coral breeches!

This affair he had handled rather adroitly; written, not altogether ingenuously, to Stanislas, and advised Letizia to hold him off while not altogether turning him away, since such a suitor was powerful and, rebuffed, might do harm. Stanislas would soon go down, he had said. And Stanislas had; already he was out of favor. Now they could tell him—very politely—that, much as they were honored by his declaration, his prospects and income were not suitable for the sister of a commander-in-chief. Casuistic? Maybe. But it had been practical and effective.

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And Joseph had gone and got himself a wife, this time quite to Letizia's satisfaction, for Julie Clary, though only a burgher's daughter, had looks of a sort and a considerable fortune.

As time went on, Napoleon had taken quite an interest in the new household—wondered how much marriage completed a man's existence—referred to it in his letters to Joseph. “I have taken a home of my own”—and a home meant a wife. Later: “Hurry with the news. I must have a little nephew.” If a nephew, why not a son?

Always punctual to the minute, he was prompt to the second when on Monday he called. The servant ushered him through an arched entrance and a small flagged court, on the side of which he saw a garden and, in the dependencies, the tails of two black horses and a red and white cow whisking, also a cabriolet needing paint.

The *salle à manger* was better: a few haircloth chairs, a mahogany table, crystal and a silver service behind a cabinet. Usually observant, he did not now note the evidences of economy which a pleasure-loving widow must practise between her fits of extravagance. For spasmodic economy was necessary when one had a position and two nearly grown children, and to maintain these only the five per cent on the hundred thousand francs of her marriage settlement, the rents of a few old houses, and an occasional remittance from Martinique or a loan from Aunt Fanny. Still, he would not have cared. For while he would have insisted on his sisters marrying well, *he* was in love! There was an adorable woman in the next room arraying herself for him; and her setting, every “prop” of it, seemed enchanting.

An upholsterer was now ushered in to repair one of

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those haircloth chairs, and Napoleon, in the charming informality of Josephine's circle, was shown by the maid, Citizeness Louise Compont, into the bedroom. He rather resented the fact that Louise seemed to be laughing, inwardly, at him; but forgot this in his survey of the blue, yellow, and red parrakeets painted on the toilet articles among the rouge and powder pots, and the yellow-wood bed with its blue canopy. Below the mantel was a fireplace with a painted screen; above, gilt and crystal girandoles and a most charming little clock. A doorway led into a dressing-room with many gilt mirrors and the ivory and black of a spinet; and from out of this paradise she floated—such was the word used by this stern soldier, suddenly grown poetic—in a house-gown soft and clinging and white but not immodest. Little hands, chestnut curls, olive cheek so softly rounded, and eyes lustrous, wide apart, and glowing with kindness; already he loved her madly. And so great was his infatuation that he exulted because she spoke kindly to her maid. He did not know that Louise sat down and ate with her mistress, was her confidante and, oh, so discreet—and perhaps there was a need for discretion. No, all he thought was, "She would be kind to coachman or king; and very kind to me."

She was, for the moment.

"Poor quarters," she said as she parted the draperies, "for the coming man of France!"

"I find them," he answered, "all that heart could desire."

"At any rate, monsieur," she said, seating herself and lapsing from the cold republican form of salutation to the older days, "it is better than a prison."

"You were in prison then?" He was not precisely a

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tender man, but his heart suffused with gentleness at the thought of that lovely body in a jailer's hands, perhaps waiting, with shorn tresses, for the guillotine.

She sighed.

“Yes, for three long months of the Terror at the convent of the Carmelites. At night I can see it still. The September massacres took place there, perhaps you will remember; and against my wall some one had stood three swords. The swords had dripped from a late encounter, and we had no water even to wash our clothes, let alone those ugly stains. They were a constant reminder.” She shuddered; then, more lightly: “I was not very brave. All I did was to play solitaire.

“I was released, though,” she went on, “after Thermidor. The Terror ended in time for me but too late for poor Alexandre, my husband. They took him away five days before.” And again she sighed.

He remembered reading the name in the proscribed list—Alexandre de Beauharnais, vicomte and once commander of the Army of the Rhine. Yet he grew jealous of this dead man. He never had had any one to sigh for him—except one. He was seventeen then, and they had picked cherries together.

But now, fearing that she had been too grave, and that was no way at all to reign sovereign over the hearts of men, she asked:

“What is your Corsica like?”

“The most beautiful place in all the world! And her scents—the sweetest anywhere. Even in camp, I cannot forget them.” Then, startlingly, he added, “Some day I shall take you there.”

“Why me?” she would have asked in surprise, but in-

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stead, for some reason, inquired about his mother. Signora Bonaparte, she had heard, was a strange woman, handsome, severe, and a little *gauche*, like her son; also, the Permons had in all charity added, inclined to parsimony. The widow was a little afraid of the portrait. But here was a new light.

“My mother is a wonderful woman. The head of a man on a woman’s shoulders, and a woman’s tender heart.” Again the abrupt ending, “She will love you.”

“‘Love me,’ ” she repeated, turning her eyes full upon him. She had called him an extraordinary young man. He was—decidedly.

“Yes, madame, because I love you and have the honor to offer you my heart.”

She stood up now under pretense of rearranging a girandole. The crystals jangled sharply. Then she seated herself, trying hard to be firm; and for Josephine it was very difficult to be firm.

“Citizen general,” she said, “this is madness! But the subdued light is at fault. It is too flattering. Come, I will draw back the curtains, and you shall see me for what I am—an old woman, with two almost grown children!” Nevertheless she did not carry out her threat, but he did, jerking the curtains sharply; then stood, looking close into her face and laughing light-heartedly.

“‘Old?’ You are young as eternal youth.” So he passed judgment, and she, flattered, tried none the less to parry.

“And you would take me on a day’s notice, in spite of myself! Know, General Bonaparte, that I am not so cheap.” She looked up at the little gilt clock on the mantel—rose. “You must excuse me now. I have an engagement.”

“With Barras?” he would have shouted, but restrained

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himself. "You are cruel! . . . But forgive me. My haste has the lover's excuse, also the soldier's. I have been appointed to the command of the Army of Italy. Any hour now may take me to the battle-field."

So he departed, and, strive as she would, she could not drive from her memory the glance of those dark blue eyes, stern and compelling, so tender and pleading, nor his last word—"battle-field"! It haunted her. She felt remorse, almost as if she were driving him to his fate—but, light-hearted Josephine, only for a moment. She had made up her mind to be more kind; but when later he called and the dialogue was almost a repetition of the first time, she forbade him to come again.

This was Monday. On Tuesday she sat down and wrote to a friend, in the confidential fashion of the old days:

"You have heard how General Bonaparte has come to my house. Well, he has been *good enough* to offer to act as stepfather to the children of Alexandre de Beauharnais, as husband to his widow." This showed the proper detachment. "'Do I love him?' I hear you ask. *No, I do not!*" This last was boldly underscored. Then she balanced the quill between her teeth. "'Do I dislike him then?' *No.*" This quite as positively. And now she started to tear the letter up but finished irritably, "But my state is one of lukewarmness; and that does not please me; and it would shock the goody-goody church people to think that a woman should consider marriage in such a frame of mind."

On Wednesday she swore to Aunt Fanny that she would not admit him again. And Aunt Fanny, who was also writing to a relative about the young general—she called him her "nephew to be"—looked up and answered in tones

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as musical and precise as those of the gilt clock which was striking on the mantel:

“Nevertheless you will take this young man. It is wise, of course, to hold him off for a time: But in the end you will give in, for if I know anything at all, my dear niece, this young man is not one to be refused.”

On Thursday came Barras. Aunt Fanny was not present at the interview, though she hovered, almost within ear-shot, for she, too, had heard the gossip. Soon the count left with a look of chagrin. When Josephine reappeared, confusion colored the lovely olive of her cheek.

“Rest easy, Aunt Fanny! He will not come again.” And she promptly sat down and wrote a note which she despatched by messenger to Napoleon’s hotel.

He was mad with delight when he read it, caught the elusive fragrance it carried, and most foolishly—for the rising general of France—and most rapturously kissed it. For he had known both the depths and heights these past few days, being most violently in love. He did not betray the manifestations some lovers show, suffusion of cheek, trembling of voice, misting of eye; but he felt all these perturbations in his heart. When he was hopeful he scaled the stars, when in despair wallowed in the trough of the sea. Without her, he swore, he would perish. There would be nothing left to live for.

But, like Josephine, he had his hours of misgivings, not that he doubted the eternity of his love, but because of the gossip he, with the rest, had heard.

“She is a creole and, like all creoles, light,” said Madame Permon when he called, hoping for some word of the woman he loved. And very stormily he had retorted:

“You women are all insufferable gossips. No woman is

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virtuous unless she is of your kith and kin, born in the same faubourg, or," he ironically finished, "descended from a mythical Greek princess."

Quite as violently he had departed, leaving Madame Permon to a state of vapors and tears.

Never, she wailed, had she been so spoken to in her life.

Even Junot, who was now paying attention to Laurette, retailed the rumors. Barras was backing her, "everybody said." Napoleon almost degraded and jailed him for that; and, seeing his chief's wrath, Junot did not refer to the subject again.

At last Napoleon argued it out feverishly with himself. "It is not true," he swore; "but if it were, I should love her still. It is my fate. The past is the past. I ask nothing of it, only of the future—that she be true to me."

At dawn, after the last sleepless night, a light broke over him. "It is only gossip after all. She was in prison. Even as I, she had to make friends to save herself and try to save her husband. Now she cannot be ungrateful. The truth is, Barras implies his conquest because he has been repulsed. It is the way of vain rakes. I know his stripe."

And the next day Barras advised him:

"You ought to marry the widow Beauharnais. You have rank now, income and talents. But you stand alone without connections. The pretty Josephine will help you."

This was cunning of Barras. Realizing his need of the strong arm of this young general, he had helped in his promotion. Now he would gain favor by playing the match-maker. This time, however, his shrewdness over-played itself. The advice was galling enough to Napo-

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leon; more so the old sensualist's proprietary air. Almost it said, "I have had her; now you take her."

For this Napoleon threatened to run him through on the spot. But since life, after all, is a very complicated affair, he jammed his sword back in the scabbard, and retorted with heat:

"Citizen director, in state and military matters we may be useful to each other. In my private affairs I do not need your advice."

Then he left the room, and though he often afterward, of necessity, consulted Barras, he never forgot or forgave him.

That note from Josephine, carrying its elusive scent, was now balm to his wounds. He trod on air, he climbed the stars, also the steps to her apartment.

It was at night. She had set the hour, knowing that the chandelier's soft light did not disclose the ravages of time; and creoles age, as they mature, all too early. And now, having so far yielded as to summon him again, she felt genuinely frightened; talked to the discreet Louise about frivolous nothings; rearranged the lilac gown that needed no rearranging; all the while glancing through the door to the *salle à manger* where he sat, the needle-like hairs of the worn haircloth chairs pricking him into an even more ramrod-like erectness.

When she had finally summoned him in among the red, yellow, and blue parrakeets and the rouge-pots—the other room was still in a state of upheaval—he kissed the hand she offered and seized at the one at her side.

"Why have you kept me from you so long?" he asked.
"But, general, it is such a few short days!"

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“You reckon wrongly. It was a century. Away from you I do not exist.”

She tried to draw her hand away.

“You know me so little. It must be a passing fancy.”

“It will never pass,” he answered rapidly. “There is no woman I have seen equal to you.”

“An old tale, monsieur, which I have heard before.”

“This time it has the merit of truth. We Corsicans revere women. I am no prude, but I have had little to do with your sex. My career has engrossed me. I thought I could do without them.” It was badly put, like a drill-major; but now the warmth crept into his incisive tones, and he fixed his eyes on hers with that piercing and mournful gaze she had learned both to desire and dread. “I cannot tell you in eloquent words.” And he repeated in a kind of despair, “Away from you I do not exist.”

And now she was touched, but she summoned all her powers of resistance.

“Think, monsieur,” she cried. “You have a career before you, and I would only be a hindrance.”

“You would help me,” he replied. “I am a rude soldier. You have been at court with Marie Antoinette; know the graceful things, society’s ways; would give me polish.”

Once more she tried.

“And I am poor, monsieur; a widow with two children. You would have to take care of them. And I am old—perhaps will be a grandmother soon. And you are—twenty-five?”

“Twenty-eight,” he gallantly lied, by two years.

“And I almost thirty-four. And really, in many ways, I am older than that.”

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“Have I not told you that you are eternal youth? As for your children, I shall love them, advance them with me to fame and fortune. And whether you are rich or poor, I care not. I too have been poor, with only my sword and these.” He touched his heart and forehead. Then he seized her hands. “So small,” he said, covering them with kisses. “But I shall place crowns in them, pour the wealth of the world in your lap.”

Trembling all through, she pleaded with him to go, to leave her alone with her thoughts.

He grew gentle. “And you will see me to-morrow? Give me my answer then? Remember, when you give it, that, as much as if you were Sanson, the executioner, you hold my life in your hands.”

She nodded, crying gently.

“Forgive me,” he said, “for my great fault. But come, dry those tears.” He took out his handkerchief, attempting, not so clumsily now, to wipe them away. “To-morrow, then, we shall *both* be happy.”

It was his gentleness, as much as his persistence, that after all told. But he left her to one more bad night, since of his passion, which should have attracted her, she was still afraid. With habit she might grow affectionate; but never could she dissemble an ardor to satisfy such a lover, having had her day. Still, he was fascinating, no doubt of that, with his noble head, that smiling Cupid’s bow, and those beautiful eyes . . . and his gentleness; so she mused from her pillow. But he was not always gentle—so masterful at times, when she herself wanted to reign. And even if she could hold him now, what about when she was forty—fifty? If after marriage he should cease to care? . . . There was no answer to that.

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Still, it was as Aunt Fanny had foreseen. On the following day she sent him into transports of delight. He embraced her, covered once more her hands with kisses, until she drew back in fright, sank on the couch, in graceful posture, for all her distress. At once he heaped reproaches on himself, fell on his knees beside her, begged for forgiveness, then jumped to his feet and wildly paced the apartment.

“The fears will fly, once we are married. Come, my adored one, we will go to the notary at once!”

They did not go at once, though they paid a preliminary visit to the lawyer’s, where Josephine, thinking the door was shut and her lover outside, womanlike, consulted the old advocate about the match.

“*Comment diable!*” exclaimed this survivor of the old régime; “better marry a shopkeeper!”

The door was ajar, and Napoleon smiled.

“I must take note of his name. Some day there will come an event of importance, and I shall give him a front seat.” . . . : He did, some years after, at Notre Dame.

It was in March, ’96, that they finally got around to the marriage contract, which was duly signed, sealed, and delivered, in this same dusty office and in the presence of the lawyer, one friend, a maid, and an aide-de-camp. Barras and Tallien also happened in, over Napoleon’s protest. Josephine had insisted on their presence, with a somewhat whiter face than usual. “He is a member of the Directory,” she said, “and powerful. Not to ask him will hurt your prospects. If you refuse I shall invite him for you.” It was the only fly in the ointment, and this he soon forgot.

A Brusque Young Corsican in Society

And as there never had been such a courtship, so never had there been such a marriage contract—with all the terms so generously in favor of the bride—also never such a ring.

“Look now,” he said, boyishly taking it from his waist-coat, “for, once on, you must never take it off.”

The bride peered within the gold band.

“*Au destin!*” read the tiny script.

And now this kindest of ladies, whose eyes radiated such sweetness on all the world, radiated none on him. She tried every subterfuge; kept him outside her door; talked to the *Citoyenne Compoin*; vowed she had letters to write, on this her bridal night! When the impetuous lover was admitted at last, he found, sharing his bed, a little dog with silken hair like icicles over a cottage thatch.

When he seized him by the scruff of the neck, Josephine clutched her pet to her breast. She loved him, would not part from him. And still the commander-in-chief was patient; and, having gained the victory at last over a toy dog, he put him out, patting him on the head. “To think,” he said gaily, “that I was jealous of you!”

In the morning she would not suffer him to kiss her. Repelled his slightest embrace. Shut her door and locked it when he left her for a moment; and when he ran back joyously, would not let him in. Again she had kindness only for Aunt Fanny, her maid, her daughter Hortense—and the dog. To him only she was cruel—cruel perhaps because, with the morning light, she wondered if she had made a mistake. More material reasons urged themselves now. After all, he was only a general. The directors had

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made him, and could unmake him. She forgot, in her anxiety, all his power, his incorrigible self-reliance which had promised to be such a rock of safety. And then he was far from being rich, in spite of his present income. That, too, might go. And he demanded so much; would insist on her being scrupulously faithful, even in little things. No more the soft security, those pettier triumphs without which she could not live. No more flattery, the delicate art of making compliments. In place of a hundred worshiping lovers—whom she could keep at such distances as she chose—she would have only this hot-headed one.

For his part, he was puzzled at her moods. He had known that women could be variable. But he had never dreamt that they could be so variable as this.

Still, since once she had criticized his coat, he who had slept in his muddied uniform, on the damp ground of Toulon, went off posthaste for a tailor. She had found fault with his bridegroom's boots; and he who had walked into the Permons' drawing-room, with boots so smelling of grease that his delicate hostess fainted, now went to the bootmaker's and ordered a dozen pairs.

When at last she changed and all at once grew kind, he was in transports of delight; by turns violent and again surprisingly gentle for such a man. She could not but yield to such gentleness.

And then in the morning he was torn from her arms.

CHAPTER XI

The Siege of Josephine and the Battle of Rivoli .

ON the coast of Italy he found an ill clad army of thirty thousand confronted by fifty thousand of the foe encamped on impregnable heights. And he said to his men with that voice that had so lately trembled in Love's accents:

“Soldiers, you are half starved and half naked. The government owes you much but can do nothing for you. Your patience and courage are honorable but gain for you neither advantage nor glory. I am about to lead you into the most fertile valleys of the world. There you will find flourishing cities and mighty kingdoms. There you shall reap honor, riches, and glory. Soldiers of the Army of Italy, will you lack heart?”

Then, in the morning mists, he hurled them against the impregnable heights, routed the Austrians, and drove them up the valley; struck the Sardinians to the north and sent them, too, flying. The foe reformed, while he was south, turned back the French; the news reached him, and he came galloping through the night. Back again went the Austrians.

There were many other such engagements. Many strongholds and many of those rich cities fell. They

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asked for an armistice, but delayed, on one pretext or another, in coming to terms. He took out his watch, the one the old archdeacon had given him.

“Gentlemen,” he said to the envoys, Austrian, Italian, and Sardinian, “I warn you that an attack is ordered for two o’clock. If I am not assured that the promised forts shall be in my hands by that time, the attack will not be postponed for a moment. It may happen to me to lose battles; but never shall it be said that I lost minutes by either over-confidence or over-sloth.”

So he entered Milan, while banners waved, chimes rang, kisses were tossed from balconies, and they strewed flowers in the way of this young conqueror who came to free Italy from her foes! And he made them pay, with a smile, for this freedom. A hundred horses, shiny black and with silver harness, he sent to each of the directors; bushels of corn, barrels of wine, droves of oxen to the army; storied paintings and statues to the galleries of Paris; and millions of francs to the treasury of France.

Now there had been other conquerors, Hoche and Kellermann, with the armies of the Rhine. “But,” said Napoleon to Duroc, speaking of these levies, “Hoche and Kellermann never thought of that.”

Then he drove on, struck north, east, south, and west, now with rapier-thrust turning a wing, again pounding a center, always where least expected, or where he unerringly guessed his enemies were planning to strike. “Against all the rules and the etiquette of warfare,” growled the Austrian leaders. “This insolent upstart must be chastised.”

And they did their best. He was almost captured at Arcola, when he led the vanguard on the bridge; almost

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killed, when he seized the colors at Lodi. What did it matter? Josephine led him on!

And he found time to do the innumerable little things which beyond the directing of armies show the man: promoted privates, hanged thieving commissioners, heartened weary sentinels at night. And he had inscribed on a retreating regiment's colors, "We no longer belong to the Army of Italy"; and tore the inscription off after the charge next day; then singled out for praise, before the army assembled, a laundress who had saved a life at a river ford. Also, as those who accused him of overweening pride should have observed, he had changed by a trifle a flattering despatch, reporting him first on Arcola bridge.

"Strike that out," he said, "and write, 'In front of the commander-in-chief charged the lion-hearted Lannes!'"

So in the dead of winter he came to Rivoli.

In the morning he had been at Verona, his army divided among the cities and valleys of the Venetian and Lombard plains. And he had been watching vigilantly, rarely taking time even for slumber, for one must not be asleep when the foe is afoot. Particularly when that foe is superior in numbers. One must guess, and that quickly.

It was in the midst of his evening meal that he made his guess, that the advances on San Bonifacio and Verona were but blinds, that the real blow would fall on the few divisions at Rivoli. He did not stop for farewell or to finish his supper. Within the quarter-hour he had seen reinforcements on the march, then galloped ahead through the night—at two was there. Even now his horse was

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being led away, streaming from flank and withers, flaking foam from the bit. He had come, so his wrangling generals said, to face disaster!

There were many of these young generals now besides Junot, Masséna, Murat, Victor, and Desaix. The gallant Muiron had fallen on that bridge, giving his life for his commander; but Berthier had come, Bessières, the lion-hearted Lannes, and Duroc whom Napoleon loved, to say nothing of those old fire-eaters, Joubert and Augereau.

Some of them stood near him now with the Alps, a white-toothed wall against a wintry sky, at their left; around them, the plateau where stood the troops at bay; at their right, a precipice sloping down from the plateau to a valley through which the leaden Adige ran.

On the plateau there was no sign of life save for the stirring of some sleeping soldiers or a sentinel pausing to refresh a fire or thrash his arms from the cold. Behind them the village church with its twin belfries and stone pompon loomed up stiff and stark; and in the convent to the east only a few lamps still burned. But myriad beads of light made a bracelet of the horizon. Twinkling north through the mountains, on the eastern edge of the table-land, far through the southern valley, these watch-fires of the foe ringed him three quarters of the way round. The little commander, hitherto infallible, so the generals muttered, had got them in a trap.

Still, they did not say this to him when he asked his few rapid questions, nor did they come too near as he took his quill and ink-well to a fire under a tripod of muskets and a suspended pot. None of those who had sworn so joyously to follow him now slapped him on the back.

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Glory, though there be enough to go around, leaves the most glorious rather solitary. Besides, it was five in the morning; the despatches had gone, but not that daily letter to a woman dancing, flirting, in a far-off capital in the North. At such a time none dared disturb him; and the couriers who carried these letters killed more horses than any who bore news to the Directory.

“*Mi dolce amor*, a thousand kisses from me. It is well, perhaps, that you cannot give me any. They burn my blood!” . . . Then, referring to her last excuse, that she was ill and could not come down to meet him at Milan: “I wronged you greatly. I reproached you for remaining in Paris when you were suffering. Forgive me, beloved. The love with which you have inspired me has deprived me of common sense. I shall never regain it. I am filled with forebodings. I fear for your safety. The distance between us fills me with alarm. It seems to me that, could I but hold you in my arms, I should rest content.”

On the frosty night air broke a sentinel’s cry. It was five o’clock, but all *was* not well. . . . Now there came a more militant note:

“One of these nights the door will break open with a crash, and I shall be in your arms!” Even in his letters there was the forward march!

But there were no white arms around him now, only the eternal whiteness of the snow, the cold hills, and the winking watch-fires of the foe. He held a little red stick to the flame, sealed with wax the letter already sealed with his heart’s blood; then he studied those fires. They formed a bracelet, a handcuff around him, but one, luckily, not yet clasped. He noticed, too, with satisfaction,

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that the jewels were far apart. The Austrian columns were therefore too far scattered to effect an easy junction. He would not spread out on the inner side of that fiery circle, nor match column with column. With his ten against thirty thousand, he could not do that. But there was a way out. He called his generals to him.

“Gentlemen, I perceive you think me in a trap. I have studied the ground, and the trap is of my own choosing. What more could we ask? We are on a plateau guarded by mountains, a lake, and a river. We need not match them on interior lines, nor need we fear their superior forces. The essence of strategy, with a weaker army, is to have the stronger force at a vital point. That,” he finished tartly and with a flavor of rebuke, “we shall have.”

He did not add that Victor and Rey, with Masséna, were marching toward them with reinforcements. That these, coming up from the west and southwest, in the morning light, would trap the ends of that bracelet between them and his troops on the plateau, crushing these wings while he broke the center. It was better to teach these generals something—the feeling of invincibility, a spirit that would laugh at any odds.

With dawn, the sunlight shone wan as though strained through the banked clouds that lay still and dead white as a glacier. White, too, were the mountains, with bare patches of crag; while the river below the cliffs flowed like a stream of molten lead from which the fire has utterly vanished. To the face the air was as chill as a cold spur. A bleak page on which to write history! But he would write it, this morning!

He sat, erect, on his horse, in the midst of his staff, and on a hillock, with his battalions disposed, in long

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rectangles, and at obtuse angles to each other, around the plateau. And now he saw the Austrian legions moving. He could tell this from the dull glint of their arms rather than from their white uniforms, which were blurred in the snow. They were spreading out, on all sides, over crag and plain; three columns from the mountain passes to the northwest and north; a fourth, east, from the defile back of the convent; a fifth beginning to climb to the plateau from the gorge of the river; and the last in the southwest, back of the church with the little stone pompon.

He looked toward the church. They were driving in his outposts. But everything was on schedule, for there was Masséna at last, with troops and guns, coming up on the southwest, with all the plunging disorder of batteries strung out over a narrow road and galloping into battle. But still the Austrian forces were superior in numbers. They were driving in his outposts now all over the plateau.

The officers on the hillock gazed at their general, incredulous. Did he not know when he was enveloped, in a trap? No, for though his face was stern, it was untroubled. As he surveyed the fringes of battle—the engaged cockades and plumes and shakos, the charge and retreat and battle-smoke—his eyes did not grow exultant like Junot's nor glow with fury like Masséna's.

Then Napoleon spoke; the cannon reverberated in the hills, and below them a white square broke. He turned to an aide: "Tell Masséna, Joubert, to hold on at all costs"; and the aide was off, a streak of red and black against the snow—now pulling his horse to its haunches before the wavering red-and-blues—gesticulating to Masséna—and Masséna, who had been busy enough before,

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was everywhere, cheering his men with waving sword, smiting them with the flat of it. They had rallied—were holding now—*barely holding*.

Again he spoke—another bright streak against the snow—and those squadrons of men on uneasy black horses were off to the east for the convent. . . . Superb! they had it! . . . Again—and the long platoons of black shakos under Junot charged for the hills.

There, too, the whitecoats faltered—but no; an Austrian regiment had suddenly appeared through a mountain pass by the lake; and the cry went up from the hillock, “Junot is cut off!”

The commander-in-chief moved not a muscle. “We have them now!” he said. For there, on the horizon, came Rey with the last reinforcements. Rey would catch that bracelet from the rear, Joubert from the front, and crush its claws.

Napoleon turned to the south. There the white columns, which all morning had been toiling, with guns and ammunition wagons, up the zigzag paths of the cliffs, had reached the plateau. No aides now—he would carry this message himself; and, striking spurs to his horse, he was off, galloping over the plain—now reining in before Leclerc’s dragoons—“Forward, Leclerc!”—before Lasalle’s lines—“On, Lasalle; win for yourself glory!”

And horse and foot, they dashed for the edge of the cliffs; clashed with the climbing whitecoats, who, assaulted with the bayonet in front, with shell from the left, began to fall back—run—then tumbled, horse and man and rolling wagon, almost *en masse*, down into the leaden river.

Prisoners began to arrive, then Lasalle with captured colors.

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Napoleon signaled; the bugle rang. Riding down the long lines of troops, returned from the slaughter, he hailed the twenty-year-old Lasalle.

“Lasalle, you have covered yourself with glory. You are weary and have earned rest. Lie down, brave comrade, on the colors!”

Again, as always, the right word. A gesture, perhaps, but where is the cynic, scoffing at it from down the long vista of the years, who would not have thrilled in its presence?

But there were other strongholds to capture; and the commander-in-chief was riding off toward the distant spires and turrets of Mantua.

At last Josephine, feeling she could no longer delay, consented to come. It was a hardship, though, for it was very pleasant, with so much going on at the Luxembourg Palace, especially since Junot had returned with the captured colors. These Napoleon had sent on as trophies to France and the Directory; and when, at the fête in celebration of the victories, Josephine entered on Junot’s arm, she was the bright star of the pageant. Such triumphs were very agreeable, even if they had been won by a young husband’s peril. For this she meant to be kind to him—later—but she had hoped to linger a little longer, say, until spring. Still, Junot had asked her: “Have you ever seen my chief in a temper? I have!” It was significant, and brother Joseph, too, was watching her as she danced and flirted the hours away—watching her very gravely. Indeed, he had been detailed by Napoleon for this very purpose, and to escort her to Milan.

“I beseech you to tell me how she is,” he pleaded in his

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latest letter, "and if she is able to come. Josephine is the only woman I have ever cared for, and you can understand how her illness" (that ever so slight illness which had never kept her from the bright lights of the palace) "has driven me distracted. I can no longer endure the separation. If she has ceased to care for me, my mission on earth is ended."

His letters to Joseph showed an especial affection now, possibly because he felt deserted by the rest of his family, who had reacted rather strangely to his marriage. And though he had always dominated his older brother, now in his distress Napoleon turned to him for help. But already Joseph had begun to think of maneuvering a divorce from Josephine.

And now that Joseph's pressure was added to Junot's representations, the bride began to be—just a little afraid. She yielded completely when she read in the latest letter: "How can I expect lace to weigh as heavily as gold? My wish is that you alter none of your plans, give up none of the parties to which you are invited; I am not worth a sacrifice. The misery or happiness of a man for whom you do not care need not concern you." . . . He had almost spoiled it by adding: "Good-by, admirable woman, good-by, my Josephine . . . Ah, Josephine . . . Josephine . . ."

So conscience once again asserted itself in her pleasure-loving heart, not so effectually, though, as to cause her to refuse that farewell supper—tears, toasts, wine, the dance, and all—with Barras and his friends in the Luxembourg Palace, nor to hold her circumspect on the journey down to Milan. She sat most of the way in the *berlin* with her maid, but three horsemen rode alongside: Joseph,

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Junot, and that black-haired young sprig, Hippolyte Charles. Often the sweet eyes gazed out of the coach window. Often, too, she invited one of her escorts to ride with her; that is, Junot and particularly Monsieur Charles. For brother-in-law she showed no such consideration; all of which may have been partly his fault, since for a handsome man he looked most forbidding, most disapproving. . . . But how could he expect lace to weigh as heavily as gold? .

CHAPTER XII

Napoleon Entertains at Montebello

THE Palace of Montebello was alight. The illumination from doorways and lofty windows streamed down through miles of terraces and vistas, over gleaming statues and lines of guarding soldiers to the valley and the far-off spires of Milan.

The Bonapartes, once more gathered together under one roof—all but Lucien—were scattered through the various apartments of the palace. They had come quite a way from the shabby lodgings of the rue Pavillon—even from the house on the via Malerbe, though that had not been without its dignity. No longer was life a question of shoes and hats for the girls, sixty-centime dinners for Napoleon, or for Lucien the signing of vouchers and shooting rats from a wine-barrel. Now there were robes and banquets quite imperial in splendor. Never outside of fairy-tale had there been so swift a climb—and all due to a much criticized brother—a little man who would have been lost in any crowd, except for the fact that crowds had a way of opening up for him.

It was eight o'clock. Josephine's maid had disappeared; and she herself was clasping ornaments with enameled gold and black lions at wrists and shoulders and surveying the effect in a full-length mirror. From a desk in the

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cabinet adjoining came the rapid scratch of a quill pen; but Napoleon looked up between the paragraphs that marched at double-quick across the pages. On his moody face, as he glanced through the doorway at the loveliness of upturned arms and bust and shoulder, was an expression of tenderness mingled with bitterness and despair. But Josephine, unconscious, only hummed an air that carried echoes of Gipsies, of far-off tropical isles, of voodoo women of Martinique. There lovely women were accustomed to dancing on volcanoes; and there were volcanoes smoldering in the eyes of the man who sat with poised pen in the next room. Yet when the quill dipped in the ink-well again, the letter to the directors had all the usual vigor and despatch. In the lines one might have caught his own incisive stride, each word an echo of his boot-heel. The directors, rulers of France, muddling things up there in Paris, should have heard and trembled. Strange dual nature that could burn with such devouring passion, yet drive the spur and crack the whip with such merciless precision.

Josephine, however, did not tremble, though for the moment her new position had lost something of its fascination. She was surrounded by Bonapartes—Joseph and Louis on the floor below; Jerome above; Eliza and Pauline, with their newly won husbands, in an adjoining wing; and Letizia with the budding Caroline just a turn to the right and one to the left down the hall. And all, she felt, were sitting in judgment on her; and the verdict was not at all favorable. She did not show her exasperation, as she reflected, by pouting prettily like Paulette: she was too sweetly gracious for that; her eyes grew misty instead.

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She came to the door of the cabinet.

“Your mother is handsome and your sister Paulette *très charmante*,” she began tremulously and by way of propitiation; then: “But no, no, Napoleon, you cannot tell me. They do not like me.”

“It is wise now to keep unhealed the breach they themselves opened; so we can extract the tribute you ask and gain advantage when the time comes for settlement”; thus scratched the quill, referring not to the Bonapartes but to the Venetians—then the quill stopped.

“You distress yourself unnecessarily, my beloved. Fear of this sort brings about the very thing feared. You show your apprehension and distrust too plainly in your manner. This prevents your coming together. My mother and sisters differ from you in race and temperament; but they will learn to love you as you will them, if you are patient. Each should give in a trifle. Come, my darling, will you not try?”

But the beautiful eyes, so near to tears before, were shedding them now. He embraced her.

“Only have patience,” he repeated; “but there, dry them”—he did that for her. “You must look beautiful for the reception to-night. There will be many there.”

The statement had a magical effect. The tears stopped; and Napoleon finished the despatch, and handed it, sealed, to an aide, then hurriedly made the turn to the right and one to the left, down the hall to his mother’s apartment. Quite characteristically, since crowds and doors opened so readily before him, he forgot to knock and entered with something of the manner he described in a letter to Josephine as “bursting in.”

Letizia, though stately and handsome as of old, felt

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a little out of place in all this new splendor. She had just thrown around her shoulders a valuable Cashmere shawl and arranged on the still chestnut curls the jeweled head-dress, both gifts of Napoleon. Her only regret was that he had not let her do her own buying. Then she might have looked well enough and still have put away a part of the money against a rainy day, inevitable even to those who had climbed to palaces.

Paulette had come in, a few moments before, to see about the hang of her skirt, for, much to her disgust, Napoleon had not yet allowed her a personal maid.

“Still, it’s almost like being a princess,” she said, as her mother bent over the rebellious flounce, “to be entertained in a castle by one’s conquering brother. Right now, *maman*”—she was affecting French terms—“we’re as good as royalty!”

“It does not pay,” answered Letizia, as well as she could, with a gold pin in her mouth, “to boast, or spend too soon.”

Napoleon, entering, caught the words. “That is foolishness, signora,” he broke out. “If not for yourself, you must look well for me.” He turned to his sister. “I wish to speak with your mother alone, Pauline.”

With a *move* Pauline swept out of the room. This young Corsican might have all Italy and France at his feet, but not his family. Nevertheless she loved him and was beginning, just a little, to fear him.

“Signora,” he began, once the door had closed behind the train, “you should not treat my wife so haughtily. She has her faults, but they are trifling. And her virtues are magnificent. These you should recognize; remember that she is a joyous creature, sensitive, and easily hurt;

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that she fights single-handed, and there are many of us in the family descended like devouring locusts upon her; also that you are older than she. It is you that should make the advances."

The fine eyes sparkled, and she drew herself to her full stature in a way that made it seem greater than it was. "In my day, my son, the old were not required to make advances to the younger." It was a skilful use of the comparative, for Josephine, at thirty-five, was but twelve years her junior. "Nor, Napoleon, did a son speak to his mother as king to subject!"

Nettled, Napoleon turned.

"There are two Napoleons now, mother: one the son from whom you can always claim respect; the other the representative of France whom you in turn must respect."

She looked at him searchingly. Here was something, not known before, though perhaps foreseen—something for his own sake to fear.

"I shall do my best," she answered, not with submission but with patience, "to win the affection of my daughter-in-law." She paused, and her voice trembled a little. "If only, my son, I could be sure she will make you happy!"

Without a word, Napoleon turned and left, pleased neither with himself nor with his family. Something like the distinction he had just made may before have found lodgment in his head; but the actual utterance of it, the opening of a gulf between himself and his mother whom he adored, left him vexed and not a little ashamed.

But now the halls below were filled with gay uniforms and even gayer gowns; and the music of hautboy, flute, and violin floated through the corridors. It was the telling

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moment for the family to descend the grand staircase, from the youngest to the oldest, and at last the conqueror himself, with his bride, radiant on his arm.

They took their places, the family ranged in proper order near him, Napoleon and Josephine, not on a dais—yet—but in a central bay that for the present served. Here they received, with all respect for courtly precedence, dukes from Piedmont, Parma, and Modena; suave mitered legates from Rome; Austrian envoys trying hard to hide their truculence and hate of this island upstart; ambassadors from the newly carved Cisalpine and Ligurian republics; owlish professors; savants with faces like their own parchments; ruddy Swiss; and olive-cheeked nobles, with their perfumed ladies, from Ferrara and Verona, from Vincenza, Bologna, Mantua, and Milan, from Bergamo, Brescia, Bassano, Naples and Venice, and Sardinia and the Ionian Isles—a long line come to kiss the sword that had conquered them. If so, why not doubly conquered through Josephine's eyes, though, to do her justice, she cared not so much for conquest as to be liked, admired, and, by a creditable group, discreetly loved.

To Josephine it was the wine of life. She dressed superbly; and she made an appealing picture in a cloud of muslin caught up with those prettily incongruous gold and black lions at her shoulders, others at her wrists. As she acknowledged the salutation of bishop or ambassador with that ever graceful bend of her neck or lent her hand to be grazed by the fierce mustachios of old grizzled veterans or pressed by some handsome subaltern, she smiled—perhaps a little more sweetly on the last, still sweetly on all.

As for the young conqueror, no longer did his boots

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smell of grease, an epaulet hitch up on one shoulder, or a bit of shirt show between waistcoat and breeches, as sometimes it had, in spite of his love of order and personal cleanliness. Josephine had “polished him up”; and Letizia, who stood a pace to the left and the rear, gave her credit at least for that.

A group of diplomats now approached, their correct wigs and powdered hair in symbolic contrast with the hair of the republican generals, which was left *au naturel*.

They came to plead against the dismemberment of Venice, for already this young general was carving up his kingdoms; and resentment, as much at being forced to supplicate a young island upstart as at any injustice, characterized their manner.

“Venice,” said they, “heir of all the ages, should not be torn limb from limb!”

“The directors of France have made their decision, citizens of Venice. I will forward your memorial to them; but I fear the time for compromise is past. And you must admit that the conduct of the Venetians has not earned it.”

He had been admirably self-controlled, but to his mother it seemed as if the spasm that had contracted his features at the first indictment came not so much from anger as from violence he was doing to something deep within. But Dandolo, a Jew of persuasive voice yet dignified bearing, was speaking again.

“But, your Excellency,” he said, “the directors will listen to you. Indeed, if without offense I may be permitted to say it, it is the brilliant conqueror of Italy who not only wins victories but makes the treaties. A word from you—your moral force—”

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But the “brilliant conqueror” knew these wily Venetians. It was not for nothing that they had chosen this public place for their presentation rather than the sanctity of his cabinet. Knowing their cause to be almost hopeless, they planned to gain sympathy or to discredit him. So he broke angrily forth:

“And if I make them, Citizen Dandolo, I do not ask the conquered for advice. Nor will I use this *moral force* to keep in power your senile Senate. Already I have shed the best blood in France to carry freedom and republican institutions to Venice as well as all Italy. By the terms of peace Austria has agreed to the partition. The glory of Venice long ago departed, and you will be happier with your cities under stronger rule than you are now in their decay, as you dream of your vanished splendor. So think you I will start more wars to bring your doddering doges back?

“And let me ask you something, Dandolo. Which of all the Italian peoples has most mistreated us, for years scoffed at us, and boasted of Italy as ‘The Graveyard of the French’? Recently, for once, you did more than boast. You fired on our frigates in times of truce, and at Easter you turned on our soldiers walking peacefully in Verona, stabbed them in the back, filled the streets with the murdered. Then, not satisfied with that, your brave soldiery rushed into the hospitals and slew the wounded on their cots.

“So much for France, Dandolo, and since you have asked me to bring my *personal* word to the directors, now for myself.” He bent forward boring in with his eyes. “Who was it, friend Dandolo, that rode out of Venice at night to bribe the directors to abjure my treaties?” Now

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his eyes swept the whole group. "Know, citizens of Venice, that the directors of France are not to be bribed!"

"Yet so you would have dishonored me before the world. And you ask me now to beg clemency of the directors for perfidious Venice! Be thankful, Dandolo, that I do not clap you in chains but let you go free!" He finished, then, with an angry gesture, turned to his aide-de-camp, Marmont: "On with the dance!"

"If you think he is in a rage now," said Rapp to Madame Pauline Leclerc, *née* Bonaparte, who was much taken with that irrepressible young officer, "you should have seen him when we met the Austrian envoys in the Tyrol. Old Heavyfoot Cobenzl, their chief, swore your brother was drunk. But he wasn't, not he, though he hadn't slept for three nights; and, under the circumstances, those two glasses of punch should have gone to his head. They would have, to any other man's. Anyway, he gave old Heavyfoot three hours to consent to his terms; then he seized a priceless vase, one Amorous Kate of Russia had sent the emperor. 'If you do not sign,' he said, 'I will smash you like this!' And crash, he drops the vase, shattering it into a thousand pieces.

"Nor had he lost his sense of humor, either, for a moment later, when he noticed an empty dais in the room, he asked, 'For whom is that?' 'For the emperor, who is absent, but here in spirit,' replies old Cobenzl. 'You had best take it out,' says your brother, quite to the point, 'for I never see a seat higher than mine without wanting to get in it!'"

By now most of the gaily clad throng had passed, blithely chattering or swaying, in anticipation, toward the music in the adjoining room. Napoleon did not dance;

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and Josephine passed in on the arm of the Duke of Modena. The most adroit foreign minister, eager for alliances, could not have found fault with her choice of partners for the next few dances. Not so discreet, however, were the glances she exchanged with the black-haired Hippolyte Charles, who hung in constant attendance near her chair, or on the words she whispered to him from behind her fan. These tactics did not escape the vigilant eye of Napoleon, as he lingered for a few moments to converse with his generals and the foreign envoys.

“Who is that drawing-room monkey?” he asked, drawing Joseph aside.

“One of our new brother-in-law Leclerc’s lieutenants,” said Joseph, adding grimly, “She flirted with him all the way down.”

“*Et tu, Brute!*” Napoleon replied sadly; then: “But you mean it well; and sometimes it seems to me that you are the only one I can trust. Still, you place a wrong interpretation on innocent actions. You do not understand Josephine. She loves joy, light; but she has the best heart in the world.”

Joseph studied him, wondering how far, for his brother’s own good, he might go.

“I understand,” he answered with tact; “but forgive me, my dear brother, if I suggest that you warn her. Already there is too much talk for one who shares your fame. Your wife should be above suspicion.”. . . It was delicate, this use of the pronoun instead of the “Cæsar”; imagination could supply that. But perhaps this is wronging the discreet Joseph, since, though he was wholly for his brother now, his republicanism might not have permitted him so to play the devil.

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Meantime he had paused ; then, carefully, and not without conscience, he planted the barb :

“They were saying in Paris that Josephine got your command for you through Barras ; even that his livres paid for the house she purchased in the rue Chantereine.”

Napoleon’s hand was like a vise upon his brother’s arm.

“Are not Toulon, Vendemaire, Italy, answers to the first scandal ? The second is too vile to notice, though I could answer it by showing the deed. Josephine paid only sixty-four hundred francs down to Julie Carreau, Talma’s mistress, for that house, before our marriage. The balance I took over after our marriage. Surely the princely Barras would have been more liberal ! . . . But you have looked after my interests, as you saw them, brother. I thank you. Now say no more. Only make my excuses. Tell them I am engaged—anything.” Then, to Bourrienne, “Follow me, in ten minutes !”

So, bowing and smiling, he left the hall, hurried up the staircase, and brushed past the sentry who stood on guard before his door.

Within, he paced up and down, consumed with wrath. He had given Joseph his answers ; but this persistent gossip was maddening ; and if so much smoke, why not some fire ? That wretched Barras story he would not believe. Still, if there *had* been anything, what had come before marriage he could forgive, *not* what came *after* !

And now to match him against this monkey with his drawing-room tricks, to the monkey’s advantage, as Joseph had reported—and he had heard it before ! . . . Was there evidence or only gossip ? And why, even if

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there were no grave cause, was she so indiscreet? Why did she show so little consideration for him?

But there was work ahead. So he sat down at his desk in the cabinet.

It was a pretty thing of delicate French marquetry for which he did not particularly care. Still, it never mattered on what he wrote; a rock or a knapsack would do. The desk had been placed there with other furniture of the same period to brighten the grim Lombard setting for Josephine's arrival, though in its fragility it should have groaned under the invisible wires which stretched from it to the armies of Italy, the sea-coast, Paris, Belgium, Austria, and the Rhine. At it he was the chess-player, sitting blindfolded and playing on many boards, keeping myriad combinations in his head.

There was Genoa, for instance, out of which and its environs he had just made the Republic of Liguria. There English ships rode in the harbor; English agents were busy with intrigue in the capital. And his own were moving everywhere, offsetting the foe, and meantime leaving a pinch here, a pinch there, of the yeast of republicanism. Faypault was in charge, watching out for him; but at a distance of a hundred leagues he must watch Faypault and also check the moves of each of his assistants. If only he could have multiplied himself a few times!

In Venice there had been more trouble. There, too, his men had circulated, spreading the yeast of republicanism and the fire of rebellion against the doges. This time the yeast had fermented all too well. The reactionaries, who had no taste for the wholesome bread of freedom, had risen in the night, murdered three hundred of his soldiers, as they walked peacefully through the streets, then

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slaughtered those in the hospitals. He had sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind. But was that his fault, any more than the Easter riots in Ajaccio, which followed hard on his intrigues—such necessary intrigues, if one were to advance a cause and get anywhere! He himself would not harm a dog, would stop a ship to circle for an hour about a spot to save a drowning man. Still, no use crying over spilled blood. Those massacres must be turned to advantage. So he had written the directors to keep the rupture open. They had ample cause now for the partition and the tribute.

Then there was Belgium. Austria was defeated but could still carry on the war. She must take loser's terms, yet must have something. He would give up a few of these Venetian cities for the far richer land of Belgium.

And that was not all. The Army of the Rhine ; he must keep an eye on that. Desaix, who idolized him, was there, would watch out for his interests. The directors? Mediocre men whose vanity must be appeased, all at a distance, while he made his treaties over their heads. Fortunately the day and night had twenty-four hours, and besides these duties he had little to attend to, except drafting new constitutions for his republics, building fortresses, deploying troops, investigating army peculations, writing despatches, interviewing spies, attaching to himself new allies, placating disaffected generals—and his turbulent family—and listening for Josephine's footstep on the stairs.

The ten minutes were now past, and Bourrienne, announced by the sentry, entered the chamber, rather diffident for one once so overbearing. He had arrived from Paris that morning, having been sent for by Marmont to

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act as secretary to the chief ; and though the two friends had not met since the old restaurant days, there had been no conversation between them, beyond the formal greetings in the hall below. It was with something of a shock, therefore, that he received only this command :

“Take this, Bourrienne : ‘Section I. The Constitution of the Ligurian Republic.’ ”

Nevertheless he wrote down the paragraphs, bits of the French constitution, of old codes, and other articles which Napoleon from study believed would fit Genoese conditions, and which he shot out, not from notes but from memory, as rapidly he paced the room.

“There, that will do.” Then he stopped and faced his secretary and a situation pregnant with both drama and embarrassment. Here was the proud Bourrienne who, but four summers ago, had patronized him, escorted him to a brother’s warehouse to pawn his watch, invited him to meals, and boasted about it—taking dictation from him ! And the once shabby protégé, now the talk of all Europe, held not only his friend’s fortunes but those of many others in the hollow of his hand.

But Napoleon had not meant to snub him. He had been quite sensible of that shock ; but he had business on hand, and it was better for Bourrienne to accept at once the situation without any sentimental nonsense. The business over, Napoleon was friendly enough.

“I thank you, my old comrade, for being so discreet, and not trespassing on our former friendship. In public there must be some constraint, as you have the wit to see ; underneath we are as of old. If you are faithful, my dear Bourrienne, I shall reward you well.”

A moment the deep blue eyes in the thin face studied

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the others, seeing them a little sulky, perhaps. At least Napoleon did not seem satisfied with what he found.

“The difficulty,” he said, after Joseph entered and Bourrienne left, “is to find old friends with capacity for what you can offer. They continually resent the changed conditions, expect still to live on the old basis. And their constant brooding on another’s success spoils their work.

“Take Bourrienne now. He is a man of gifts, yet he will always have a grievance. He will never forgive me for those few one-franc dinners he gave me; would wave *l’addition* before me if he could, instead of earning the rich posts I should be glad to give him. I am afraid the same applies to Lucien.”

He sat down, waved Joseph to a chair. Joseph also seemed under some constraint. Perhaps he felt that the little sermon had been intended for him as well as for Bourrienne and Lucien. And it is indeed hard to adjust one’s self to sudden glory, particularly when that glory is not due to Providence or one’s own merit but to the very vivid personality of a younger brother.

Still, Joseph, who was growing increasingly handsome in a grave way, and would have made the excellent judge that he looked, or the just executor of a large estate, was on the whole a safe man, and his reports were to be relied on. Two of these Napoleon now desired. The first concerned conditions in France.

“It looks more than ever,” Joseph began deliberately, “as if another revolution threatened. The royalists are gaining every day; and in the Club Clichy they plot the overthrow of the government. Already they have won many seats in the Legislative Councils, and they control one director.”

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“And the rest are asleep,” Napoleon broke in. “They have lost all the energy of '89 which won the Revolution, and do not realize that the victor must be ever vigilant to maintain what is already won. In a false security they dawdle over affairs of state and will come near to bringing the Bourbons back—though not if I can help it. Already the Revolution has done much for the world; and that would be the crime of the ages!”

“Still, you must go warily,” returned Joseph. “Directory and Legislature are deadlocked. I would advise espousing neither party too soon.”

“And so let the Bourbons back! Never!” returned the younger brother with heat. “But you are right on one point. It is wise not to champion too openly the present directors, who, with the exception of Carnot, are all muddlers. Meantime we must plan to get our own men in.”

“Yourself for one,” proposed Joseph—the just judge again playing Apollyon. But Napoleon would have none of it.

“My victories for the present are on the field of battle. First I must consolidate my position there, make secure the glory already won. The other field I shall not enter until I head the pack. That day will come.”

Then he returned to the subject from which Apollyon's temptation had deflected him.

“It may be wise also not to take too *open* a part in the politics of Paris. Let the people *appear* to settle things themselves, or they may raise the cry of ‘Dictator!’ But one thing must not be uncertain, that I and the army are republican to the last man. If they lift one finger to restore the Bourbons, I shall loose my battalions on Paris!”

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He thought for a moment about ways and means.

“To-morrow I shall send Lavalette on. He is careful, discreet. With you and others we can trust, he can circulate quietly, circumvent the plots of the Club Clichy, and prevent more of the Councils from going over to the Royalist side.”

Here he paused in his pacing, nettled. “But you are not listening; your mind wanders!”

And indeed, for an interlude, Joseph had not been listening. He had been saying to himself: “Why so much of that parade-ground peroration? He is ridiculous. Can he not credit me with some sense?”

Now, Napoleon was seldom ridiculous even when hectoring, lecturing, or riding the high horse; and he did not credit his brothers with any too much wisdom. So he went on, after calling Joseph back to that attention which all, sooner or later, gave to this frail but dynamic personality:

“Be wise as the serpent, harmless as the dove. Win to us allies from all classes. From coffee-house and gutter, spread anew the gospel of republicanism. Open the minds of all to the dangers of reactionism. Above all, direct the eyes of Paris to the armies and to Italy! Let them learn to look on us as a woman on her protecting husband, the strong right arm of France!

“Meanwhile I shall aid you with proclamations to the armies, which you shall have printed in the ‘Moniteur,’ also in circulars for wide distribution. See that these, too, are read in the Councils and before the public on fête-days. The directors I shall myself stiffen by advantageous treaties with our foes and new possessions. There shall be gestures enough!”

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Joseph, not unreasonably, had another word of caution. "Have you counted on Hoche? He has won *his* victories, on the Rhine; catches the crowd; is handsome, dashing—"

"Too dashing," returned Napoleon. "He rides for a fall. . . .

"Now a little later, after you have prepared the ground, I shall send Augereau to Paris, to give them a picture of what the army is like. He looks as if he snorted fire from his nostrils and drank a quart of blood before breakfast. That will be impressive. And he is more than merely reckless; he will act with effect, throw all the troops in the capital around the Tuileries, if they try to overthrow the directors. And he will do it without any instructions from me. This is not only what I like, but is helpful, since we must not appear to have too many fingers in the pie."

Here he took his brother's hand affectionately.

"Louis le Grand said, 'I am the state!' You, Joseph, must preach, for the present crisis, 'The army is the state!' Later we can give them another formula. . . . And now farewell! I have won success, but with it the bitterness of knowing there are so few one can trust. Of you I am never doubtful. You, my dear brother, have my deepest confidence and love."

This parting message he delivered with utter sincerity and with that melancholy which is never long absent from men of daring imagination who have trusted much to a Fate even more inscrutable than themselves.

From below came the sounds of the music, the lilt of women's laughter. For that second report, which con-

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cerned not the field of war or politics, but the ball-room, he did not ask.

His mother could have given him this report—and of a conduct of which she did not approve—as she sat by the wall in a massive Lombard chair which made still more august her impressive bearing.

“Does not mother look well?” said Paulette in an intermission. “There’s not a white thread in her brown hair and not a handsomer pair of eyes in the whole room. And her complexion, without rouge, is better than yours or mine, Eliza.

“I am pretty, but I shall fade quickly,” she added with strange foresight for her eighteen years, perhaps a premonition of that dread disease which would destroy her and the brother upstairs as it had their father. “I would give anything to look as she does at forty-seven!”

Letizia had received courteously the celebrities who had presented themselves, answering them usually with short sentences and some reserve, now and then being roused into the longer periods and precipitous Corsican eloquence of which she was capable. But she was glad that now they had left her to her thoughts. They were many this night.

For one thing, she could look on Pauline’s beauty with less disquiet. For Paulette was married—*hum*, yes, safely enough—even if it had been on pretty short notice, in the chapel below—so short, gossips said, as to be virtually a confession. Well, Leclerc was a good match; and favorite daughters had made slips before now.

And indeed most of the children had married well—Joseph to the good Julie Clary, who brought a very nice *dot*, along with a good enough disposition; and Eliza

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to their old neighbor Bacciochi. True, he played the violin so abominably that Napoleon had threatened to throw him out of the palace. But then Napoleon was no judge of music either; the falsetto in which he sometimes hummed "Malbrouck" was quite as bad. . . . There was Eliza now, approaching with her husband. Certainly no beauty, with her thin flat chest and her longish legs made worse by those high-waisted gowns. But how much her features were like Napoleon's! No, after all, she was *not* bad looking, and she had done well enough. Bacciochi was dull, but he would be a generous husband.

If only Lucien had shown as much foresight! . . . Poor little Christine Boyer! She was a sweet child and well meaning, even though an innkeeper's daughter. Napoleon would look after them and their babies, if Lucien did not thwart him. But that is just what he might do. . . . It was sad for a mother to see her children, once so united, in spite of their quarrels . . . drifting apart . . . to become virtual strangers.

But *quest' è troppo!* There was that Beauharnais woman again!

"How many times has she danced with him, Paulette?"

"I do not know. Five, I think, *maman*."

"Seven," corrected Eliza.

"*Basta, basta!* It is all so humiliating for Napoleon. I cannot forgive her. She is a light woman."

"Give her sufficient rope, mother. She will do for herself."

"You cannot always tell. Strong men have a way of becoming enslaved by just such women. And she is not only light but extravagant. Panoria Permon writes me

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that she bought *forty* hats in one season. That was when she was supposed to be poor. What will she spend, now that she has a successful husband!

“And,” she went on, “fame as a general does not necessarily mean wealth. Your brother’s salary is only twenty-thousand francs.”

“Fifteen, mother,” declared Paulette. “Junot told me.”

“Signor Junot should not gossip about Napoleon with his sister, nor should you allow it. Even so, it’s that much the worse. The creole will ruin him.”

For one thing she knew about her son: he was, in matters of personal conduct, honorable. He might take enough of the booty his arms had won to maintain the appearances necessary to his rank, but not one sou more!

Suddenly, however, she felt ashamed, and exclaimed:

“All this talk is disgraceful. Ten against one woman; it is unfair! We must do what we can to win her love!”

There was another occurrence that night that also troubled her. She could not forget her son’s face when he answered those gentlemen from Venice. Was he growing hot-headed, uncontrollable? Would he go about smashing kingdoms in a temper, even though he would not stoop to loot a treasury?

In the throng she now caught sight of a face, a young man’s, which she vaguely remembered. It was youthful, with a fine expression which without derogation might be called “sweet.” Searching her memory, she suddenly recalled the young man who, seven years ago, had come with Madame Saliceti to the via Malerbe. They had talked about a certain young lieutenant; and he had been very enthusiastic. The two were almost of an age—yes, had birthdays on the same day. Seeing Eugène Beauharnais,

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the bride's seventeen-year-old son—Letizia liked the boy better than his mother—she asked him to bring the stranger to her.

They came across the floor, and he was presented. A "Citizen" Revillé—yes, that was it, though once there had been a prefix and a "Monsieur." He seemed glad to see her, and she noticed that his face grew luminous as they talked together.

"We talked of my son before. Do you remember?" she asked, the first formalities once passed.

"Yes, signora, I remember it well."

And now this most reserved of women could not but yield to the call of confidence she had felt so long ago; and the question came out:

"What, signor, do you think of him now?"

"As before, signora. Our prophecies were right. He has gone far."

"*Pardon*; it was your prophecy." Then the question almost followed, quite as before: "Would you say, up the right road?" But this, at least, was withheld; and the young man continued, with great enthusiasm:

"He is a magnificent leader, signora; one of the greatest the world has seen or ever will see. He is both general and statesman, and so few have been that." Then he paused, and she was sure he had sensed her unspoken question and was trying to find the answer for her, as at that other meeting when, to reassure her, he had said, "All his instincts are right." And now he answered:

"It is hard in this world for a practical leader always to measure up to the ideal; life is too complicated. But you can depend on it, signora, that your son will advance civilization further than has any other man for the past

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seventeen hundred years. He will be much criticized; but none of his critics will be able to show such a harvest."

"You must have an interview with my son. He will get you a post where your talents would show—oh, do not shake your head; for you have them, monsieur."

"If I could only help—but I cannot," he replied, bowing his thanks. "As I told you before, my dear signora, I am but a spectator of the scene."

"A spectator of the scene!" Her son was anything but that. Being Corsican and therefore superstitious, she began to feel that this extraordinary young man, born on the same day as her son, was her son's other self. Seven years ago he had come at another time which she had felt to be critical—after that dream of the meteor streaming in glory across the sky, with herself and her chattering brood of youngsters in its train. It was uncanny. She tried to shake the feeling off, to tell herself that the stranger was but a very intelligent young man, possessed of ideals beyond the times—perhaps an abbé, without a post, in a godless age—but nothing more. Still, her mystical sense of him would not down. Like Brutus, she was sure she had had her apparition. But what he was does not matter, since he served as a symbol. And now he had gone, and she was not to see him again for many years.

It was with these disturbing reflections that she rose, bade those about her good night, and left the hall. It was not so long ago that Napoleon looked up at her as she held the candle in her hand, in the house on the via Malerbe, and had wished that some day he might see her on the staircase of a palace. He had fulfilled his wish, but she was not happy.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mother and Son

SAY to General Bonaparte that his mother would like to see him," she told the sentry. It seemed strange to send in word like a humble petitioner, to be kept waiting at her son's door. Still, he did not keep her long, and received her with something of tenderness.

"My son," she began as soon as he escorted her to a seat, "you have gone far; but you are still my son; so permit me to urge one word of caution. Have you thought well on this dismemberment of an ancient kingdom? Is it consistent with the principles I have taught you?"

She had expected the eyes looking down on her to blaze; but they did not; simply held hers for a moment, then turned away. She wondered what conflict—if conflict there were—was going on in the soul those eyes masked. Then he spoke—wearily, she thought; and again she cursed the woman who she was sure had brought that look.

"Signora Mother," he said, "these things are not in a woman's province. There are practical reasons."

She paused, wondering what she might say. She was not given to analysis; and her ideas of honor were like primitive people's, sharply cut, blacks and whites, chiefly pertaining to personal conduct. Perhaps there was nothing wrong, and he knew best. Still, she had a fear that all

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was not well; and she wanted so to say the right thing, something that would influence him on the road he was to travel.

“Is not ‘practical’ sometimes a dangerous word?” she asked. “Cannot an act of state be judged simply as wrong or right?”

Still he was patient.

“I will try to explain. This Venice has long been a thorn in our flesh. She has conspired against us, attacked our soldiers, sunk our frigates, after peace has been signed. And her government is too corrupt to live.

“Now—what do I plan? For do not think, signora, it is the directors that decide. It is I. Very well, I trade a few of her effete cities for Belgium. That satisfies Austria’s pride; and the rest of Venetia I link with the strong Cisalpine Republic.

“What is lost? Practically nothing. Simply a decaying kingdom which, like a water-logged ship, would sink anyway. Even the traded cities are but little worse off under Austria, while the western are far safer with a flourishing state. Furthermore I win Belgium for France; and as the representative of France, I must look to her interests and win new territory, to make her strong. We cannot stand still; and we need money, land, troops, to hold off our foes—England, Spain, Austria, Prussia, all Europe. For every king is determined to see the Revolution go down and to put the Bourbons back. They hate republican institutions, you see, for our success may mean the loss of their crowns.

“And I will be frank. I will admit I have intrigued for it. I am no priest, neither am I an idealist dwelling on the mountain-top. I live in the valley with millions of

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fighting, cursing, lying men, many of whom would like to see my downfall. I do not fight unfairly; and in matters of personal conduct I do not forget the principles you have taught me. But with all this intrigue around me, I must fight guile with guile, match spy with spy, buy those that can be bought, and falsify bulletins to stave off panic after defeat. And, mother, answer me this: what matter a few bribes, false rumors, lies, when conditions force me to them, and when by them we set the world free?"

She felt baffled; there was so much that was incontestably right in what he said. Nevertheless she had not found the reassurance she wanted.

"Forgive me," she said at last. "All I want is that you shall act nobly—always—so that, whether you succeed or fail, when your time comes you will have nothing to regret."

So she went to her room, and Napoleon to the adjoining chamber to see if Josephine had returned.

In an open portmanteau he noticed a packet of letters carelessly left by the maid in the hurried unpacking. Mechanically he picked them up, ran his eye over the superscriptions, noted the preponderance of masculine handwriting, started to open one, then, as if ashamed, threw them down. The disarranged pile revealed one in his mother's large, sprawling, but painstaking script. This, without compunction, he opened and read.

I have received your letter, madame, which could not but strengthen the impression I had of you. My son had told me of this happy union, and from that moment you possessed my esteem and approval. Nothing is wanting to my happy-

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ness but the pleasure of beholding you. Be assured that I entertain for you a mother's affection and that I love you as one of my own children.

My son encourages me in the hope, and your letter confirms it, that you will soon pass through Marseilles on your way to join him. I rejoice, my dear madame, in the pleasure the sojourn here will afford me.

In the meantime be assured that my children, following my example, have dedicated to you the same devotion and affection which they entertain for their brother.

Believe, madame, in the love of

LETIZIA RAMOLINO BONAPARTE.

He could almost see his mother at the task. She had her gaucheries, and her French was execrable; Eliza, fresh from St.-Cyr, must have translated it; but the august phrases were Letizia's own. She had done her best, yet it was scarcely designed to attract one of his bride's *sensibilité*, if she read between the lines. Never in the world would they find each other.

But now at last there was a step on the stair, a turn of the door-handle; and Josephine was there, redolent of triumph, humming lightly that Martinique song. The song died and the triumph dimmed, as she saw his eyes. She kissed him—perfunctorily. He did not return the embrace.

“Josephine,” he said, “dismiss your maid. I wish to talk with you.”

The woman gone, he began, not angrily but sadly:

“Why do you distress me with these flirtations? They are harmless, you say, but surely it does not become you, as my wife, to receive the attentions of others.

“And what can they give you that I cannot give? I have just won seventy battles and conquered many king-

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doms. The battles need not concern you, but the kingdoms should; also the jewels which, as I promised, I will pour into your lap. And can any of these sycophants give you a love that is deeper than mine? Yet with *me* you are chary even of your kisses."

She did not answer, standing with head bent over the tray into which she had just dropped a gold lion, the muslin dress falling away from a soft shoulder. The sight, which always gave him delight, now perversely added to his mental torture.

"*Mon Dieu*, what have I done?" he broke out frantically. "How have I deserved such treatment, I who think only of you, live only for you!"

So he strode from the room. But, a little later, he heard his name called—a choke—a sob. He entered the bedroom where she lay, clad in a diaphanous robe for the night. She was in tears—they came so easily to the poor Josephine. Still, he could not stand them. The storm was over. The last rumble died away. She perceived this—looked up—brightened—then patted the pillow beside her, beckoning with her little finger. And because he wanted to forget, he, the conqueror, obeyed that little finger.

The hours passed. She lay asleep, dreaming of who knows what petty triumphs, and smiling as she dreamed. But he was once more awake. In the midst of his own triumph he had tasted the bitterness of defeat. He parted the draperies and looked out on the stars shining over the valley. And once he had said that there could be no bliss like this, to lie under the stars in the soft white arms of a loved woman. . . .

CHAPTER XIV

By Cleopatra's River

NAPOLEON was not accustomed to linger on the scene, once the footlights were dimmed. In fact, he usually preceded the curtain. So on Christmas in the year VI of the Republic, 1797 of Our Lord, the commander-in-chief came up from Italy, by way of Rastadt, where he had been conducting sundry little negotiations, and entered Paris, with the cries of Noël ringing faintly in his ears. He had been born, said Letizia on that memorable day back in Ajaccio, as our Saviour had been, without pomp and after a journey, and neither in a bed, for the one had been laid in a manger, the other on a carpet. But a new kind of savior was then more to the relish of most of the French people; one who came riding with a challenge on his lips instead of a beatitude.

But it was all to be expected, with memories so fresh of creaking tumbrils, and heads held up by the forelock, and succeeding these, an effete and inefficient oligarchy of Moulins and Barras robbing the exchequer in private and flaunting their scant-clad mistresses in the public gardens. One may admit the ultimate dominion of the spirit; but the millennium is such a long way off; and it is only human to hail a more practical leader—in the year 1797 of Our Lord, the year VI of the infant Republic.

They received him in the Luxembourg Palace with

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something of acclaim and not a little of splendor; with heads uncovered, and bevies of beautiful ladies thronging the corridors. True, a little of coldness characterized the ceremonies. He did not thrust himself forward—they did that for him—and to disarm suspicion, he appeared in a blue and white uniform that was conspicuously plain when contrasted with the flamboyant plumes and tunics of the directors. But the directors could not guess his intentions, while he, though preserving an impressively calm demeanor, felt inwardly a little ill at ease. Indeed there was embarrassment everywhere, for the audience studied him covertly, as the staff of a counting-house might study a visitor inspecting the establishment, with the possible intention of taking it over, employees and all. And an untoward incident occurred as he began to address them in his jerky but vibrant phrases: a young man fell from the topmost gallery to the marble floor, his blood splashing the Greek gowns and the pink and white bosoms of the ladies. This accident was scarcely reassuring.

Nevertheless, he had brought them trophies, much moneys, and many kingdoms. And he had trumped the Royalists. For old Augereau had ringed the Tuileries round, quite as Napoleon had expected. Even those who knew not of his manipulations knew that his was the directing hand. And fortunately he had incurred no odium for the transportation in barred cages of the intriguing Royalists and councilors to the fever-ridden swamps of Guiana. The tender-hearted blamed others for this. And, as a matter of fact, the punishment had not been of Napoleon's invention, though it served his purpose very nicely.

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Josephine, too, had come up to Paris, though by a different route, with the discreet Louise Compont and, this time, with an equally discreet convoy, therefore without the black-haired Hippolyte Charles, though with Fortuna, the lap-dog, who had been most woefully indiscreet. She, it was said, had played false with a Milanese mongrel who had no right in the Palace of Montebello; and the puppies had been drowned to the accompaniment of much tears from the tender-hearted Josephine.

Napoleon did not haunt her bedroom now; the rouge-pots and colorful parrakeets amid the yellow-wood furniture had lost much of their allure. He appeared with her a few times in public, hiding himself in the rear of the theater box, and conducting himself, partly from caution, more from native good taste, with a modesty most becoming to a conqueror only twenty-eight years old.

Perhaps there were other reasons for his absorption. The world, conservatively speaking, was now his oyster. With his sword he had pried its shell partly open, only to discover in the corner the pearl of the Orient. The bright coloring and elusive mystery of that pearl appealed to him—he had read much of it in his boyhood—for there had trod great Cæsar and Alexander; and manhood sometimes gives a triumphant solidity to the vague dreams of impressionable youth.

In these months of inactivity and comparative retirement he was not happy; had lost something of his *sang-froid*, had also become acutely suspicious. He had saved the directors, but, like hounds and master, they watched him, he them, for the first move. To Josephine and Bourrienne he declared they were planning to poison him. And he was uncertain, too, of a larger pack.

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“The public cheer me now,” he said—to Bourrienne. “To-morrow they will curse me. I must give them new cause for cheers.”

Egypt seemed the one way out. And there were many practical reasons for the expedition, as he told the directors at the Luxembourg Palace.

“Prussia, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Naples, all hate us. They will never rest until the Bourbons are restored. England uses her navies to help them and plays the banker for the rest of Europe. She is the most implacable foe of France. But capture Egypt, cut off Britain from Suez and her colonies, and she will be bankrupt, an easy prey.”

This was artful, for not only would he be too far away for them to put poison in his snuff-box, a device they later tried, but he knew they were planning to send him on an expedition against England; and being always unlucky at sea, he had no mind to be ignominiously dashed in pieces against the white cliffs of Dover.

Other motives there were, of course, having to do, no doubt, with that young Alexander and the bald Cæsar, whose records had stood too long; but the reasons he gave the directors were sufficient; and on May 19, 1798, he set sail from Toulon—eluding the watchful Nelson cruising offshore—with a dozen tall ships of the line, as many frigates, and several brigs, also a learned company of scholars, astronomers, and chemists who were to pry out the gems of learning from the mummy Egypt, once Napoleon had unloosed the moldy wrappings. And if ever a mere man was fitted to galvanize a mummy, make quick the dead, it was this slight, frail soldier, muffled in a too-great greatcoat, with an odd, round little hat

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tilted forward over the sight of a telescope, through which he watched for far-distant shores.

With these savants he had many arguments. They tried to prove to him that no mind directed the movements of the stars above them, or controlled the tides of the sea that leaped in majesty to the quarter-deck. And there, on the quarter-deck, he unloosed on them one of his bulletins, as ringing as any he proclaimed on the field of battle. He, the stern realist, defending an unseen power! It was enlightening. His audience was confounded. Possibly his prestige had something to do with this. At any rate the savants were silent.

Incidentally, he became quite seasick and stayed much of the time in his hammock, when he was not on deck elucidating the ways of God or picking up an island or two, such as Malta, to put in the French pocket. But in spite of these captures he had no stomach for the sea and vaguely mistrusted it.

In sight of land and the ancient city of Alexandria where that other young conqueror once flourished and was now buried, he felt relieved; and there was no touch of *mal de mer* in his proclamation to the disembarking soldiers:

The people among whom we are going to live are Mohammedans. The first article of their faith is: "There is no God but Allah; and Mohammed is his prophet." Do not contradict this. Pay respect to their muftis and imams as you did to the rabbis and bishops. In all things accommodate yourselves to them.

And remember that these people differ from us in their treatment of women. Nevertheless he who violates is a monster. And he who pillages dishonors us and makes enemies of those we would have as friends.

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"No more tolerant," he dryly observed to Marmont, "than Elisha the prophet when he advised the captain on his conduct in the House of Rimmon. Still, now they will make me out a Mohammedan. I'll wager a hundred louis to ten that the English will start that rumor, and, *tiens*, before the week is out, have me circumcised!"

They found Alexandria, though it housed the dust of the immortal Alexander, shorn of its glory, full of filth and fleas and jackals. But the warriors in moth-eaten robes, who defended its donjons and ditches of dirty water, fought bravely enough; and many homesick Frenchmen dotted the tawny sand with blue before the scaling-ladders were hooked into the crumbling old walls and they took the city.

Then began the march into the desert. It was hardly the picture of which the grumbling recruits and mustachioed veterans had dreamed—this tawny waste like a vast and almost untouched canvas, with only the daubs of a few watermelon plants, the fronds of solitary palms, a cluster of dirty huts and, on the margins, a mirage to show the artist's hastily sketched conception, with bits of hieroglyphics for his undecipherable signature. It was sunny enough but not at all like Italy. And ever they were harried by dysentery and plague, and by bands of turbaned warriors who rode out of the night, on their swift steeds, to attack them and to vanish as mysteriously as they came.

And all the time Napoleon walked beside his men, refusing a mount, ate only lentils, sucked melons to quench his thirst, and slept on the parched sand. No hardship or misfortune was theirs that was not also his, and by choice.

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So the weary columns came at the end of the third week within sight of the pyramids. To the south they crouched in all the cryptic solemnity of the ages; by them flowed the mighty river of Cleopatra; over on the other bank shimmered the minarets and hemisphere domes of the city of Cairo, a soft mystery even in the glare of the midday sun.

But between the Frenchmen and the flowing river lay the trenches with twisted turbans showing above; back of them *dejermes* and Turkish gunboats; and, farther along the bank, the winged squadrons of the Mamelukes, the finest cavalry in the world until they met Murat's darlings.

At once, without pitching his tents, Napoleon divided his troops into two wings, one to rush the trenches and the flotilla, the other to sustain the charge of the Mamelukes, with a few puny field-pieces to support them. Now if ever, with these valiant but homesick soldiers before him, many scarcely able to stand, was the time for the right word. It came.

“Soldiers,” he said, riding along the lines and pointing aloft at the massive piles of stone, “forty centuries look down upon you!”

It struck home, twanged just the right string in the Gallic nature. The disheartened soldiers were transformed into heroes once more. The right dashed for the trenches—and they were trenches no longer but mere seams in the earth filled to the escarpment with distorted and tangled robes, turbans, and carbines.

Then on the squares of the left broke the Arab charge—a sight to make the bravest heart tremble. Those swart faces and glittering eyes, the gesticulating carbines and

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the wild guttural cries, smacked to the superstitious of the supernatural. But wave after wave broke on the square, only to be deflected into the lane between the two wings, through which they danced madly, raked by fire from both sides, and vanished—those that were left of them—over the rim of the desert.

From the trenches on the shore the troops now swarmed over the decks of the gunboats and the *dejermes*, which, like wooden prehistoric monsters, patrolled the Nile, then crossed over into the pink and white mystery of the city. Here they found dirt and squalor but also fountains plashing for the wounded, cool sherberts for parched throats, and for starved senses, gay bazaars and gaming places and pleasing, if somewhat plump and muddy-colored, Egyptian dancing-girls.

Despatches of the victory were duly sent to the Directorate. Napoleon came on Bourrienne as he was inditing one in the palace of Elfey Bey, now the official headquarters.

“So,” the conqueror said, looking over his secretary’s shoulder, “you have put that in!” He referred to the speech before the pyramids. “*Un peu charlatan!* Did you count our dead? Only thirty, with three hundred wounded. Never mind. Make the casualties heavy and leave the epigram in. It will be impressive.”

But despite his cynicism there were dangers enough, with all Egypt arrayed against his thirty-odd thousand, few stores to support them, and the sultan of Turkey planning to swoop down on him through Asia Minor. Against such odds it was something of a trick to hold this new empire. Already he was determined to colonize it

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and at once dictated to Bourrienne this comprehensive order on France:

“Send immediately,” he wrote the Directorate:

- Item 1: A company of actors;
- Item 2: Ditto of dancers;
- Item 3: The wives of all the men employed in the army;
- Item 4: Some dealers in toys, say three or four;
- Item 5: Ten doctors, twenty surgeons, thirty apothecaries;
- Item 6: Some founders;
- Item 7: Fifty gardeners with their households and every kind of vegetable seed;
- Item 8: Also some distillers and dealers in liquor;
- Item 9: 200,000 quarts of good brandy with each ship-load;
- Item 10: 30,000 ells of cloth, blue and scarlet;
- Item 11: A supply of oil;
- Item 12: Much soap; and
- Item 13: A hundred women.

He knew the wiles of those dancing-girls.

Then, after despatching Desaix and Murat against the revolting beys and their villages, and himself fighting battles at Salehyeh and El Aresh to keep his hand in, he sat down to put other things besides daubs in the Oriental picture. Giant ovens, bakeries, foundries, breweries, windmills, sprang up, almost overnight in the shadow of the pyramids. He formed a dromedary corps, clothing some of his abashed troopers in a beautiful robin’s-egg blue, with white turbans, and mounting them on the tawny humps of the swaying ships of the desert. The psychological effect on the natives was tremendous.

And he set his savants to unwrapping mummies, de-

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ciphering strange scripts, pawing over bas-reliefs. Where only fountains, the notes of amorous music, and the patter of dancing feet had brokén the silence, now sounded profound disquisitions on abstruse subjects, professorial bellows made the fires dance on little forges, and sable and carmine chemicals did most astonishing things in retorts. He even established a university or two and served as vice-president; and compiled a monumental work on Egypt and the Orient.

But no longer at night around the watch-fires did he indite burning letters to a lovely woman in the North. Leagues of sea-water lay between, but ships could have carried them. Something had burned out. He had no taste, however, for the beauties the beys and sultans sent him. Their opaque brown eyes and their plumpness, creased as if strings had been tied around them, displeased his fastidiousness. In this he differed from Junot and others of his generals, who caused some trade for the toy-makers Napoleon ordered from Paris. European beauty was a trifle more to his taste.

It was thus that he looked from under the arches of Elfey Bey's palace the third week of his stay in Cairo, and saw a lady passing through the street. Costume and carriage were quite Parisian, and her fragrance was wafted up to him by the breezes which rumpled the silver tresses of the fountain in the square.

“Who is that?” he asked Bourrienne.

“A lady who secreted herself in our ship, in a hussar's uniform, a Madame Fourès; and for her husband she does not care.”

Bourrienne thought he could read his chief's mind, and he invited the passing beauty to the staff dinner that

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night. She came—sat with the general, Bourrienne, Croisier, an aide-de-camp, to the discussion of iced sherbets, gooseberry water, and Paris. She prattled prettily, was charming. She knew how to entertain the sons of men, even such as promised to be lords of the world one day.

About nine, Napoleon spilled a glass of wine over her dress. He did it purposely, making as little effort at concealment as he did in some of his political maneuvers. All knew his object, and he did not care that they knew. As if to repair the damage, he followed her into an adjoining room. Soon the others as discreetly left. And when the silver crescent almost coincided with the golden one on the mosque over against Elfey Bey's palace, the cloaked figure of the lady emerged. It was almost the hour for the first muezzin, the sunrise call to prayer.

The following day he wrote Joseph a letter which showed at least the afterglow of that burning passion for his wife and even more of fraternal love for this older brother to whom he now clung with a fierce affection:

Be kind to my wife. See her occasionally. I am asking Louis to give her good advice.

I am sending a handsome shawl to Julie [Julie Clary, Joseph's wife]. Don't be *quite* so unfaithful to her. She is an excellent woman. Make her happy—

But then Julie had taken no leaf out of Josephine's book; Julie had been faithful to Joseph; her eyes had never once strayed from her handsome scholarly husband. And he, for all that scholarly air, wore, for the world to see, the boutonnière of primrose dalliance on his lapel. When, in the week following, Napoleon rode abroad

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with the Fourès, and the ingenuous Eugène, Josephine's son, came to him, pleading that he spare his mother, Napoleon's eyes blazed.

"Am I not human?" he broke forth angrily. Then he grew calm and studied the youthful face. The boy did not understand; to him the mother was still beyond reproach.

"You are right," he added. "Forgive me. It shall not happen again."

To spare the boy, the public rides were discontinued; the affair went on in secret, though the bright-eyed Fourès never gave him the love he craved. And when, as the weeks passed and he grew increasingly fond of her, and actually begged for a child, she demurred and broke into tears, but secretly laughed at him.

"I sometimes wonder," she once told a confidante, as with the latest cosmetic she warded off the ravages of time, "why great men cannot win our hearts altogether. They command great armies, *ma cherie*, but cannot command us. Perhaps it is because we feared him, knew he would never follow us as he did his other bright-eyed mistress, Fame.

"Now, that black-haired Hippolyte Charles was out at Malmaison with Josephine every day, they say, while we were in Egypt. Yet he was virtually a grocer's clerk, and Bonaparte was the greatest man in all the world.

"Still," she concluded, "I might have been faithful to him—in my fashion—if only our union had not been so left-handed."

This, however, was years later. Lady and conqueror are gone; but the pyramids still stand; still echoes that "Soldiers, forty centuries look down upon you!"

CHAPTER XV

We Must Keep Our Heads above the Waves

ON the following day, as Madame Fourès looked down from the arches upon the square, troopers of the Dromedary Corps halted before her and threw many sacks to the ground. Out of these sacks round dried-up leather-like objects rolled and tumbled about like so many cabbages. Now, one may look on a lifeless cabbage without disturbance; but there is something awesome in the human body when life has departed; and there was something particularly repellent to the sensitive lady about those dried-up heads with frozen grimaces, rolling out there by the fountain. And she shrank from Napoleon's touch, as he came up behind her.

“Did you order *that*?” she asked in a frightened whisper.

“I did not stage that for you but for them,” he answered rapidly, indicating with a disdainful gesture the staring populace. “Come, my dear, inside. No? Like all the rest you must have an explanation. *Eh bien*, you shall have it. It is, you see, just a little lesson—the only kind they understand. When I first came I pardoned many. Did they like that? Oh, no! I was too tender; and for thanks they cut in pieces whole boat-crews, beheaded my

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aides-de-camp and our messengers bearing flags of truce. Now they will love me.

“But what is that naughty fellow saying up there?” He pointed to the mosque, where a dark figure stretched his arms to the sunset sky, calling in sonorous tones the muezzin of the hour. “Here, Bourrienne—” he shouted to the inner room, “get me an interpreter quickly. I do not understand their language; but that has an unfamiliar sound. And the people are restless.”

When the interpreter came, the voice had ceased; and in spite of the sword at his windpipe the fellow persisted in saying it was simply the age-old call to prayer.

“It is useless to kill him,” declared Napoleon; “the rascal would welcome the martyrdom. But I do not like the smack of it. So watch closely, Bourrienne, and have him on hand for the next muezzin. Meantime double the guard about the palace; and you, little one, do not go out on the streets.”

Bourrienne, however, was neither so keen nor so watchful as his chief; and when Napoleon returned, some twenty-four hours later, from an excursion to the river islands, it was to find armed natives prowling through the city and many of his own soldiers killed. He had been right. The servant of Allah had mingled with his petitions to High Heaven invitations to do murder in the more earthly streets.

The lady should have loved him more deeply now, for the care he had shown her, and, if Beauty ever loves Bravery, for the intrepidity with which he raced through the streets as, disobedient to his orders, she watched from the arches. He was everywhere, recklessly exposing his person, but with a purpose; now striding from post to

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post, bringing up his field-pieces, and driving the natives from quarter to quarter. But women do not always love to the uttermost a masterful man.

It was just before this uprising that Napoleon had to meet a greater test. That was when Bourrienne brought to the palace the despatch telling of the loss of the fleet off the shores of Aboukir. He might have his victories on land; but Nelson was to have his at sea. There Napoleon was indeed unlucky. Now they could get neither stores nor reinforcements, indeed might never see France again.

As he handed over the despatch, Bourrienne watched him closely, more closely than he had the man on the mosque. One who has patronized a great man, pawned his watch for him, and bought him dinners, is apt to do that. It would be reassuring to find the fatal flaw and so have one's feeling of superiority restored once more.

Napoleon broke into the expected denunciation of Admiral Brueys's foolhardiness; and for a moment his rage was terrible. Then he made a rapid turn of the apartment, paused, and gave the observer the impression of a man shaking off a bad dream or rising from a cold plunge in icy waters. "Our courage must not fail," he said; "we must keep our heads above the waves." Then another march up and down—one more angry phrase—and a smile and a shrug of the shoulder. "Well, Bourrienne, here we must remain, to achieve a grandeur like that of the ancients."

Bourrienne's pen was now scratching rapidly. As was sometimes his custom, he was preparing the bulletin for the Directorate, to be signed by his master. And he wanted to hurry this one, which he was trying to make favorable to his old friend, the dead admiral, and, if possible, to

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get it signed and off by some fugitive ship before his chief had scanned it too carefully.

Napoleon read the despatch.

“That is soft, not pointed enough.”

Bourrienne looked up. Had he found the flaw?

But Napoleon had plunged into an outline of his own victories on land, which he hoped might soften the blow of the reverse at sea. That done, there was a pause in the dictation—something unusual with Napoleon, who was frowning as he reflected.

And he was troubled, feeling reluctant to criticize a dead man and much preferring a more chivalrous gesture. But here he was, marooned in a hostile land, with the sultan of Turkey bearing down on him from the north; and things were not going well in Paris. The French, brave as they might be in battle, had never recovered from the horrors of the Revolution. The news of a great reverse, if put as that, might bring on a panic; and the Republic, still a creaky structure, would fall in pieces, particularly if he tacitly assumed the blame and they lost faith in him. And then she could whistle away the great empire of which he had dreamed.

As for the dead Brueys, he had been valiant enough, but had shown criminal folly in remaining in the open sea off Aboukir and not anchoring in the harbor of Alexandria or the safe port of Corfu. He himself had suggested that. True, he had not actually ordered it, and had left matters much to Brueys’s judgment. But one thing was certain: Brueys and Villeneuve had not exerted the energy or foresight he himself had shown on land. *He* did not let such things happen; and he must abjure the blame. Stifling what compunction he felt, he returned to the desk.

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“Take this, Citizen Bourrienne:

“I departed from Alexandria in the firm belief that the squadron would soon enter the port of Alexandria or sail for Corfu. I received several letters from the admiral which, *to my surprise*, announced that he was still at Aboukir. I wrote immediately to desire that he would not delay another hour. But the admiral informed me by letter of the 2nd Thermidor that several English ships had come to reconnoiter him and that he was prepared to receive the enemy at Aboukir. *This strange resolution filled me with alarm.* I am of the opinion now that he did not want to go to Corfu. . . .”

It was all adroitly put—with such scanty details at hand and with his doubts about the messengers—for he had not directly accused the dead man and yet had implied his own good judgment. Then he came to the end:

“‘If on this fatal occasion he committed errors—, *Diable!* Do you not hear me, Bourrienne?’”—as he saw his secretary lift his pen in hesitation. “Simpleton, you do not understand. I cannot let a disheartening bulletin out now. I shall crown your friend with laurels later. Now go on: ‘If on this fatal occasion he committed errors, he has expiated them by a glorious death.’”

Then he sat down and wrote, with his own hand, a most tactful and tender letter to the admiral’s widow.

“Strange man!” said Bourrienne as he left the place. “One moment a noble action, the next a mean one!”

But war and statecraft are at best unpleasant businesses. And there are, oh, such excellent reasons—the good of the state and all that—for these unchivalrous, if not precisely *mean*, actions. That moment of reflection

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during the dictation may, after all, have been a pregnant and significant, if not a critical, one.

Still, there were other and sterner problems that engaged him now, as he came to Joppa by the Sea, where once Peter had seen a great sheet let down from heaven with its cargo of unclean beasts.

With but thirteen thousand of his troops he had marched up into Syria, leaving Kléber behind to hold North Egypt, Desaix and Lasalle to conquer the wandering tribes. And with this handful he planned to open a way to India, rousing the Christians to a new crusade as he went. An absurd expedition; but with him nothing was absurd. He had an odd way of turning a vaporous fancy into a granite fact. The higher the wall, the greater his determination to climb it; a superb audacity which would lead him surely to deeds of glory but also perhaps to that fall which Letizia feared for him. Nevertheless men loved him for it.

So he stormed Joppa recklessly and put it along with so many other storied cities in his pocket. And since it had been taken by assault, his legionaries were putting the inhabitants to the sword. It was a rule of warfare; also the especial custom of the country; and to be respected one must observe the customs of the country.

Still, he himself had little stomach for wanton slaughter. A soldier trained to arms, with the tradition of countless generations of soldiers, may look with sorrow, but without remorse, on the human débris of a battle-field, if it be a victorious battle-field. In 1799, at least, warfare was the normal way of life; it was still a fine thing to show courage, sweet to die for one's country.

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Massacre, however, though justified by precept and example, and, too, quite necessary, since those spared would only arm themselves to fight again, was to him abhorrent. And he sent two of his aides-de-camp, his stepson Eugène and young Croissier, to stop the slaughter.

So they were brought before him, three thousand of the rescued. There they sat on the sands without the walls, squatted on their haunches, with their hands bound behind them, and quite impassive except for the glittering eyes in the dark faces. But there was no hope in them. Gentle sometimes may be the night breezes of the Orient, dulcet the soft voices of its doves, pitying the oases and palm-guarded wells; but there the heart of man knows no pity for a foe. It is as arid as the hard-baked sands, as vengeful as Cleopatra's asp. The "Sultan Kabir" must have his little whim; he was but meditating on some new and ingenious cruelty by which they might be lingeringly destroyed.

Never before had he or any merciful conqueror known such a moment. He looked, with steel in his face, but compassion in his heart, on the wretches; then strode up and down, striking his boot with his riding-whip. At last he turned on his young men.

"Why in the devil's name have you served me so?"

"But, citizen general, you sent us to spare them!"

"Yes, fool, the women, old men, and children—but not these dirty ruffians. What does your ingenious fancy suggest that I do with them? Am I to let them go, only to arm themselves and harry our rear; to escape and hot-foot it to Acre, there to swell the defending forces; or shall I use up precious battalions to guard them? And where is the bread to feed them? Already we ourselves

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are on half-rations. But there, you have done it. Pass out the bread."

So the biscuits were given to the prisoners while the hungry soldiers swore and grumbled. And for three nights he kept the pack under guard while councils of war were held in his tent.

"It means mutiny, general," said Jourdan.

"That none of us will ever get back to France," added Junot. "Already the troops are suffering from wounds and privations; you have lost many with plague; the rest will not stand starvation."

Inwardly Napoleon cursed himself. It had been a foolish gesture. For what profited it to spare them from death in the compensating heat of conflict, only to shoot them down in cold blood? And that, as he had foreseen, the minute after he had sent off Eugène and Croissier, he eventually would have to do. Compunction had cost him dear, would blacken his name for generations!

So for three nights he tossed in his tent and paced the sands by day, looking seaward and hoping for a sail that would take some of the wretches to France. Truly his was a more unpalatable mess than that which had been set before Peter. And he would get no sainthood for eating it!

With the fourth dawn, he turned from the shore and approached his generals, through the murmuring ranks of his soldiers.

"Have it your own way," he said bitterly. "Take them to the shore—anywhere so long as they are out of my sight!"

The prisoners were roused from their slumber, pricked with the bayonet's point down to the sea, then lined up—assassins, many of them, but still human beings! He or-

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dered the bugler to sound the march as volley after volley rattled in the rear. Looking back, one might have seen the rising tide washing the black figures farther up on the sands. But he did not look back.

He refused, however, to play the rôle of Pilate.

“Such are the facts,” he wrote to Joseph—for publication. “I gave the order, and I could not have acted otherwise. A parent cannot toss his children’s meat to the wolves or let loose the wolves from the trap to devour them. And my soldiers are in my charge. I am a father to them.

“Eugène did not realize the predicament he got me into,” he went on, for Joseph’s eye alone. “I shall be damned for the ages. That I knew, the second he brought them in; and for once in my life I postponed a decision for three days, I who act so quickly! He and Croissier might have foreseen the trouble—disobeyed my order—let it go for a gesture, for which, however, I did not intend it. Still, I should not blame them. Eugène is a good boy. It is fate. Let the English use it as they will!”

It was at this most propitious moment that Junot, brave, handsome, but scatter-brained, chose to acquaint his chief with certain little incidents in which Josephine had figured in Paris. There on the sands, at the end of the day’s march from Joppa, he told him, hinting at, if not directly charging, adultery.

Enraged at the opening of an old wound, Napoleon turned his back on the bewildered Junot, who had but thought to do him a kindness, and confronted his secretary.

“And you, Bourrienne, are no friend, either,” he declared with an understandable lack of logic. “You also

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knew, everybody knew, yet none of you would tell me." Then, with the vision of the black-haired young grocer's clerk, he broke his riding-whip in two and flung the pieces on the sand. "God damn them! When I return, I shall exterminate all that breed of fops and puppies in Paris!"

"But, general, you must not think' of divorce," said Bourrienne, trying hard to be tactful. "It would ruin you. Think of your glory!"

"*My glory!* God in heaven, what would I not give to believe that which Junot tells me is a lie!" Then he added brokenly, "So much did I love her!"

So he disappeared into his tent to another sleepless night, and, a few days later, came upon the towers and ditches of St.-Jean d'Acre. For eight weeks he assaulted the city with shot and scaling-ladder, now and then dashing from his trenches to defeat with one of his master-strokes the hordes of reinforcements coming down from the north. And these he held off, sometimes at odds of ten to one. But food and ammunition now gave out. Of the thirteen thousand men he brought north with him, plague and wounds had taken six. Then came the message from Paris saying that Italy had been lost.

"I had a presentiment of this," he told Junot. "First Joppa, then your tales of Josephine, now Acre; and, as if that were not enough, the fools have lost Italy. I shall sail at once. Kléber has the troops to hold Egypt and colonize it. Later I shall send him reinforcements. My place now is at home."

Thus it was that, after one more victory on the shores of Aboukir, to leave behind a last taste of his prowess, and with a special admonition to Kléber to look after the little Fourès, he set sail in a frigate and in October, 1799,

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was chased by the prowling English fleet into the harbor of Ajaccio.

Once again he saw the blue waters of the gulf, the ancient walls and gates of the town, the familiar belfries of San Giovanni Battista, the green hills, and old Monte Rotondo sparkling in the distant sunshine. And as they dropped anchor the bells of the convent came to him over the waters.

On the *quai* the townspeople who had driven him away now gathered to greet him. For the time at least they were proud of him. But this pride was embarrassing, for half of the town claimed kinship with him; the other half held up their offspring to be kissed and blessed as his godchildren. Now, in Egypt he had exacted some twelve millions of tribute; but this he had scrupulously preserved for France, only sixteen thousand francs going into his pocket, scarcely enough for transportation. On this fund considerable inroads were made by the godchildren. These francs, of course, were in the form of strange Turkish sequins; but Uncle Fesch, who had returned to Corsica, changed them for him at the bank.

It was with some feeling of sadness that Napoleon found only this one of his more immediate family still dwelling in the old town. With him he visited the house on the via Malerbe, now restored after the pillage, lingered for a while in the coop in the attic and in the summer-house he had built on the terrace. Also they went to the altar of the cathedral, where the murdered del Sarra had lain, and walked by the shore where loomed above-ground the stone houses of the dead, and where now dwelt the old archdeacon.

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In a way it was a happy interlude, though tinged with melancholy. Almost he wished he might stay there in Ajaccio, but while he might long for peace in the brief hour of an autumn twilight, in the bright daylight he was restless. Not only did Duty call him, but he had asked, too, a question of Fesch—about his wife. Before his gaze the broad placid face had looked uncomfortable. The abbé had no mind to interfere in this family quarrel; but his answers had not been reassuring.

As the English frigates had now disappeared, Napoleon embarked in the morning and sailed out of the blue waters of the gulf. He was never to see it again.

Within a few hours he landed at the port of Fréjus.

Word of his coming had preceded him to Paris, by courier and letter and in other and mysterious fashions. And as usual such news of him stirred things up, among the directors and the various members of his family who were now residing in Paris. At once the brothers and sisters, with their kinspeople, repaired to Joseph's cozy home in the rue Rocher, where Letizia stayed. They had much to say.

Meantime word passed from lip to lip, on the boulevards, at the outdoor tables of the little cafés; while in the theaters few gave heed to the performance.

“Bonaparte is on his way—is here—he came last night, is in seclusion—*diable*, no, he will be here to-morrow”—so ran the news around Paris.

And all the way on the road up they were opening the gates of the cities, bevies of beautiful maidens, tricolor-clad, welcomed him, and portly mayors read their tiresome speeches; while horsemen dashed on the neighboring towns eager to herald his arrival.

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So he rode north, a still frail figure, with face as brown as an Arab's from the Egyptian suns, and eyes somber and brooding when they did not have to smile at the citizens crowding around his carriage.

Josephine, when she got the word, was instructing the gay guests of the Luxembourg Palace in the new game of *creps* which she had introduced from the tropics. She was casting dice; but when she impulsively decided to drive down and meet her husband, her fortune deserted her. Unlucky Josephine! She took the wrong road.

CHAPTER XVI

Josephine Takes the Wrong Road

JOSEPHINE, then, was shaking dice when the news came that her lord and master had returned from Egypt, had landed, and was riding fast toward the house on the rue Chantereine, known aforetime as the Lane of Little Pigs and recently transmogrified, out of compliment to the conqueror, into the Street of Victory.

She was at the house of Director Gohier. There had been eight covers at dinner; later other guests had dropped in to gather around the green baize-topped table, a proceeding that Madame Gohier, as reputable as she was portly, disapproved. But politics, like revolutions, make strange bedfellows; and there had come, in particular, Barras, looking, with his plumes, blue and white tunics, red ribbons and yellow sashes, like some knave slipped out of the deck; Madame Saint-Aubin, blond luminary of the Théâtre Feydeau, in white silver and crape and a fillet of gilt wheat-sheaves; Julie Carreau, the actor Talma's old mistress; Talma himself; Therezia Tallien, she of the raven bob and blood-red shawl, also of the white legs revealed in the loveliest candor by her gown of diaphanous white; and Talleyrand, with his grand air and limp, his diplomatic suavity an only half-effective soda for the acid of his smile.

Citoyenne or Madame la Générale en Chef—it was hard

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in these transitional days to tell which was preferable—was teaching them *creps*, not alone to furnish her share of entertainment, but because, as she whispered to the little white ear under Therezia's raven bob: "My bills for Vendemaire" (the brave month of vintage in the Republican calendar) "were simply frightful. I would have sworn that never had I purchased so many garters and heron-plumes. But *c'est la vie!*!" She hoped to recoup.

Into this picturesque gallery of celebrities and rulers of France, Fouché suddenly thrust his egg-shaped skull. More than ever did he look the sandy-haired death's-head, with lids lowered like shutters over evil eyes, on his thin S-shaped line of a mouth that eternal simper.

So her lovely arm, soft olive and so well turned, stretched forth from the group—the gold wheat-sheaf fillet, the snuff-taking gentlemen, the knave slipped out of the deck, the raven bob and blood-red shawl, and the death's-head.

The dice fell—rolled—and away went one of the little towers of gold louis before her.

Again—and again—now another tower. "Diable!" said the lovely lady; and still Fouché waited with his simper, while Talleyrand took more snuff—with an air.

Josephine saw him out of the corner of her eye. "How cynically," she thought, "that man takes even snuff!"

Now the last little gold tower had been whisked away; and Fouché's finger-tips fell like five cold bivalves on her arm.

"I would tempt Fate no longer," said the minister of police. "He travels fast!"

She turned with a swift movement from the waist, even in her alarm still graceful.

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“Who travels fast, Citizen Fouché?” she asked, her little fist flying, clenched, to her parted lips.

“Your adoring husband, the illustrious general,” supplied Talleyrand, bowing and applying thumb and forefinger outlined like a bird’s head with brown grains in its beak, first at one nostril, then the other.

“There must be some mistake, Fouché,” she cried. “Surely you are wrong. He would not leave without sending me some word.”

“Even so, Citoyenne Bonaparte, he is here,” said the death’s-head, “on the road to Paris, and not, I should venture to say, sparing horse-flesh.”

She knew that he was not mistaken. Did not this master spy know everything that went on! And surprise was her husband’s first rule in love as in warfare. Any moment now he might “burst in the door.” The bang of it almost exploded in the ear of her fancy, followed by the echo of his boot-heel.

Ruefully she looked at the green table. She had hoped to be able to pay off some of those debts long before his arrival. And, generous as he was, he could be very stern about debt. That he had learned from madame her mother-in-law. And she hated to see people stern. It was hard, when all she wanted was to have a good time, to be happy herself and see others happy! But one thing was certain: his brothers must not reach him before her. If they did, Heaven help her! A pretty tale they would tell, and as bravely embroidered as Barras’s coat or Junot’s and Murat’s uniforms. Hastily she swept up her fan and purse.

“How charming to see a two years’ bride so eager to greet her husband!” said Talleyrand, to the blinking

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minister of police, as she fled the room. "Perdieu! It is a positive reaffirmation, restores one's faith in human nature."

Outside she leaped into the berlin, bidding the postilion lash his horses—a cruelty unusual in the soft-hearted Josephine.

"Louise! Hortense!" she called as she gained her room. "The general is on his way. Any moment he may be here. Oh, I know he will be angry! What shall I do?"

"Why not, *maman*, ride down to meet him?"

"A stroke of genius, my child," exclaimed the lovely lady, kissing her daughter on the cheek, her tears now turned to laughter. "You confirm me in my own decision. If he is vexed, that will disarm his anger. But hurry, Louise. Pack. Don't stand there like an idiot, gaping!"

Meantime the various members of his family had gathered at Joseph's house in the rue Rocher. It was a cozy home, rather elegant too, for Joseph had capitalized his brother's fame and the comfortable *dot* which Monsieur Clary, the rich silk merchant of Marseilles, had turned over to him with Julie.

First Pauline had danced in, all soft curves and enchanting chatter; then, more mannish and imperious, Eliza. Louis had brought his young side-burns and a new hussar's uniform all green and gold, with a furred pelisse over the shoulder. Letizia surveyed him dryly. She could not altogether blame Napoleon for his disappointment in Louis. The little fellow he had taught and supported, covered up at night to protect him from the air of the Auxonne marshes, had turned into something of a dreamer.

Lucien, who now appeared with his wife Christine, was

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more promising. He had given up three jobs that Napoleon had secured for him; but now he was a rising young legislator in the Council of Five Hundred, making speeches to his heart's content—good ones, too—and looking quite well in his red senatorial toga.

His wife Christine, too, was a satisfaction. Only an innkeeper's daughter, to be sure, and a bit pock-pitted. But she had a sweet face and wore her clothes well. Nothing could be more *svelte* than her gown—from the hands of the renowned Germond—nothing less—though it cost too much. She learned very quickly, that girl.

And Julie was no trouble—so amiable and with such common sense. If only the widow—to Letizia, Josephine was still “that widow”—had half as much!

Letizia had not greatly changed. A little gray in the chestnut, a few lines at the corners of the mouth, and a decided paling of the old peach-blow; but still plain of dress and awkward in her French, yet stately and commanding and with the old noble candor in the fine mouth and expressive eyes.

“Is not that like him?” Paulette was saying as her mother entered the room, from upstairs where Joseph had set aside an apartment for her. “To think of skipping over the sea and across all those countries without letting any one know!”

“Eh! He has come in time,” said Eliza. “The creole’s conduct has been perfectly scandalous!”

“Perhaps it was to catch her napping,” Pauline suggested.

“I hope she hasn’t heard the news. Then his eyes may be opened,” Eliza returned. “Napoleon is not one to wear the two horns.”

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The boys made no comment on their sister-in-law; and Julie and Christine, who, though they had been thoroughly merged in this turbulent clan, yet had a little of understanding sympathy for Josephine, were too tactful to defend her now.

Letizia, however, was in no mood for gossip.

“This is no time for incrimination,” she said in rebuke. “The important matter is that your brother has returned.”

“She never paid you any attention—hasn’t even called,” persisted Paulette, pouting.

“I know; she has shown me little respect,” her mother answered. “But all I want is Napoleon’s happiness. If she has been indiscreet, things may be patched up. And you do not *know* that she has been more than that.”

“*Mon dieu!* Mother!” exploded Eliza. “That dandy, young Charles, the butcher—”

“He isn’t a butcher,” interrupted Pauline. “He’s in a wholesale house; they export something.”

“Groceries, then,” Eliza retorted. “It does not matter. She bought a partnership for him or persuaded old Boudin, the merchant, to give him one. How? You may surmise.”

But Paulette was shaking her pretty head.

“No one so old,” she said. “To do her justice, like me, she prefers them young.”

“Enough, Pauline! Have you no decency?” (This from Letizia.) Pauline, however, hadn’t—not much more than Josephine.

“*Eh bien!* Leave Boudin out,” said Eliza, taking up the thread. “There’s Barras, Gohier, a whole pack; to say nothing of—”

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“*Basta! Say nothing!*” broke in the mother, her dark eyes flashing fire. “Time will settle all these things. All we are concerned with now is that your brother gets the proper welcome. He has been away from home for a year and a half, in strange lands, and through many dangers. We must be at his house in the event of his wife’s not being on hand, as I suspect she may not.”

“Trust that,” said Pauline, in a murmur now, not daring more.

But Joseph and Lucien, who had been conferring, announced their intention to ride down to Lyons to meet the wayfarer; and the host pulled the bell-rope to order out his cabriolet. Louis, too, had a suggestion.

“Do you not think it wise,” he asked, caressing his side-burns and shifting his pelisse at the prospect, “for me to announce the news to Madame la Générale en Chef?”

“An imbecile idea!” Eliza again exploded. “To warn her and not let him see!”

“*Per Dio! Did I not tell you to hold your tongue, Signora Bacciochi? Go, Louis. Give the widow a chance. It may save him hurt.*”

So off Louis posted. He had not made the suggestion through consideration for his wandering brother only. In the course of following Napoleon’s injunction to give Josephine “good advice” and relieve her loneliness, he had found duty somewhat less than stern, and her brown eyes—no, they were dark blue—or was it black—she was so dark of coloring one always thought of them as brown—anyway, he found them quite fascinating. And she, on her side, always welcomed “dear Louis.”

And, “Dear Louis,” she said now, “thank Heaven you have come!”—taking his hands in hers, there in the mêlée

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of petticoats and sheer nightgowns which she was assembling to enslave the conqueror. There was no sign of tears. Before men who did not know her so well as Napoleon she was ever the poised, the lovely, the superbly dressed, and the most adorably feminine.

“It is good to see you,” she went on. “Besides, you can drive me down to meet Napoleon. Of course you have heard the news. Will he take, do you think, the Bourbonnais Road or the Burgundy?”

“The Burgundy; it is shorter. I shall engage a berlin”—he had none of his own, a hardship for which daily he blamed his brother—“and will lead the way.”

So it was that, a few leagues beyond the city walls, Madame de Bourrienne, riding up to Paris, saw Louis riding down, and, following him, a carriage with two fair passengers asleep, their poke-bonnets beside them, the chestnut hair by the flaxen, Hortense, compassionate even at her sixteen years, pillowing her mother on her shoulder. And Madame de Bourrienne, who, like many in Paris, got some amusement out of poor Josephine’s tragicomedy, or comitragedy, did not stop them, though she had reason to think that Napoleon had gone the other way.

He had—Josephine’s luck had deserted her; and when she was aroused by “Wake up, *maman*; we are at Lyons,” it was to be informed by a jubilant crowd of hostlers, postillions, and cooks, who had left their horses half hitched in the shafts, their lentils and their *bouillabaisse* scorching in the pots:

“*Le général est arrivé! Vive le général!* The general was here; the general has gone. *Oui, madame;* he *has* gone—swift like the eagle. How he kicked up the dust! I saw him—and I—and I—brown as an oak-leaf in win-

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ter; with folded arms thus, and so stern! But when he smiled it was as though the angel shone through. Which way, madame? By the Bourbonnais Road. 'Impossible?' *Non, madame. Oui, oui, via Bourbonnais. Voilà!* There still hangs in the air the dust of his wheels. And here is the *deux sous* piece he gave me. I shall keep it for our children. *Merci, madame, merci!* He is the best man in all the world!"

"Too late! Now he will *never* forgive me," she cried. "And the only word I get of him is from lackeys!" At which Louis looked blank, Hortense pitying.

"We shall hurry back, *maman*. And make no mistake. He will be overjoyed to see my beautiful mother. There, dry your eyes. *Déjeuner*, Uncle Louis, might help a little."

And Uncle Louis, himself only twenty-one, began to think a flaxen aureole of hair, violet eyes, and sixteen quite as attractive a combination as creole brunette, olive skin, and thirty-seven.

And *le général*—"the best man in all the world"? "Brown as the oak-leaf in winter, from the Egyptian suns, his arms folded thus," and not smiling like any angel now, but with eyes somber and stern, he whirled on toward Paris to a street once called that of the Little Sucking Pigs, then of the Queen of Song, and now of the Victor.

The horses were jerked back until traces and whiffle-trees almost snapped; Napoleon leaped out, bade Lavallotte and the officers who had been transferred to Joseph's coach when the brothers met him, drive on to their homes; and also dismissed Joseph and Lucien; then entered the door. No one in the reception-room, or in the dining-

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room on the stiff horsehair chairs. He raced up the steps, two at a time. The rooms were empty. On the bed was still the imprint of her form. His hand trembling through memories, he touched the place.

“The hare has flown. The nest is still warm.”

Now Louise entered, no longer laughing in her sleeve. This was no *gauche* lover sitting like a ramrod awaiting his mistress, but an enraged conqueror.

“Where is your mistress?”

“She just left, Monsieur le Général en Chef. She rode down to Lyons. Very happy she was in the thought of meeting you.”

“A likely story. She has taught you, too, to lie. Take yourself off. What are your wages?”

“Oh, monsieur.”

“Do you not hear me? I will not have two lying women about. One is enough. What does she owe you?”

“Five months’ wages, Monsieur le Général—two hundred and fifty francs,” she faltered. “And there is two hundred more I lent her.”

“Lent her! She borrows from her maid! Runs up bills, with all the money I allowed her!”

She was in tears. He did not like a weeping woman.

“Never mind. You abet her, but it is not wholly your fault. There. Here are a thousand francs. You may wait until your mistress returns. Now tell me the truth.”

“It *was* the truth. She went down to Lyons.”

“Truth! *Comment diable!*” Throwing up his hands in despair, he left the room and locked himself in his cabinet. Fifteen minutes later Louise knocked at the door.

“Madame the general’s mother wishes to see him.”

Composing his features, he descended, to find not only

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Letizia but the whole family assembled on the horsehair chairs.

“Ah, mother!” he embraced her, held her in his arms. She thought he trembled, gazed at him longingly. “Joseph, again, my beloved brother!—and Paulette, prettier than ever!”—tweaking her cheek. So, almost in the order of his affection for them, he greeted them. “Lucien!”—no rancor now in spite of all those jobs so wilfully abandoned—now Eliza. “And Caroline, you will rival Paulette, give you a year or two more. Ah, Jerome, my little cockerel. *Tiens!*” he passed his hand over the smooth cheek—“I have heard of that silver-mounted shaving-set you smuggled in your room. I hope you use the sword as well. Julie, you are welcome. You are just right, but no more bonbons! Diet. You are at the danger-point. Christine? No. Yes, it is. How well you look! No little country girl now. Bacciochi, my hand. You too are welcome as long as you do not bring your violin!” He looked around. “Where is Louis?”

There was an embarrassed silence. They knew but hated to tell and so confirm her story. He thought he detected a little malicious triumph on the faces of the girls—also on his brothers’. Letizia, however, was fair.

“He went down to Lyons—with Josephine—to meet you.”

His look thanked her. But he was in no mood for family parties.

“You must excuse me,” he said, almost mumbling now. “I have to dress—see the directors.”

They left, and from the window above he heard their careless chatter: the “He’s brown as an Arab” of Pauline; “Has had his hair cut short,” from Caroline. Then Eliza

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—“I told you she wouldn’t be here. Now maybe he’ll wake up”—followed by the “Hush, don’t wound him!” from his mother.

A day passed, twenty-four hours of interviews with the directors, Barras, the Abbé Sieyès, Gohier, Moulin, and Roger Ducos, with other celebrities, Caulaincourt, Cambacérès, Réal, Admiral Bruix, and hordes of staff-officers. The halls were full of swallowtails, swords, and bright sashes.

At night he tossed in his room, got up to go into hers, looked into her closets, running his hands gently through the perfumed things hanging there, then wearily returned to his bed, to lie sleepless, listening for returning wheels. Despite the bright eyes of Madame Fourès the old wound had been opened again—for the last time.

In the morning he heard the wheels turning slowly, almost wearily, as if to symbolize the passenger’s own fatigue and fear.

He did not go down to say futilely like any other husband, “Where, madame, have you been?” He turned the key in his door, and received Barras instead. So she had to wait, sitting on the bed with the arms of Hörtense around her, Eugène bending over her, consternation on his handsome ingenuous face.

She did not dare to enter while Barras was there. Within a half-hour Barras left, glancing in at the three, with a cynical look of malice that suggested the rake supplanted in a lady’s affections, or perhaps persistently rebuffed. When he had disappeared she knocked at the door of Napoleon’s room—timidly. No answer—louder this time—and still no response.

“Napoleon—Napoleon,” she cried brokenly. The man

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within shuddered but did not stir. Tears streaming from her eyes, she returned to her room, threw herself on the bed, and would not be consoled.

Another half-hour passed. She tried it again—listened—only the scratching of his pen. He was going on determinedly with his writing—and making a botch of it.

And again tears and the prostrate figure on the bed. “What have I done?” she wailed “—only wanted—to have—a happy time. That was not wrong, was it, Eugène?”

“Of course not, mother.”

“They have gossiped about me—lied about me—his sisters—mother—”

“Hush,” said Hortense.

At last she brightened with hope and raised her head.

“You go to him—both of you, my dear ones. He loves you; perhaps he will listen to you.”

Napoleon’s anger had never been for the boy, except on that fearful day in Joppa—then only for the moment. And Eugène was valiant. Nevertheless he approached the cabinet with apprehension, pulling his sister by the hand, Josephine stationing herself on the stairs.

“It is I, Eugène,” the youth said, knocking. “Will you not open to me, *mon général?*”

The lonely man within the room tore up his notes—the first so treated in years. He appeared in the doorway. The storm seemed over, for he glanced, not sternly, but mournfully at the two. “Ah, Eugène, Hortense!” Tenderly he embraced them.

Out of the corner of her eye Josephine was glancing

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at him. Looking very well, she thought ; his figure scarcely less thin but more sinewy and harder, and straight as an arrow—and not *too* angry.

Then she was not so sure, for he looked down on her. The handkerchief she held concealed her face, all but the chestnut coils and the olive forehead so sweet in its contour. But he caught sight of the eye peeping out of the corner of the handkerchief. *Appraising* him, eh? Dramatics again—*diabolique!* she could give lessons at the Odéon. A curse almost escaped him, but he stifled it, as Hortense placed a hand on his arm and called him “father.” He tried to think back. Yes, it was the first time.

He studied the girl’s face with its wide violet eyes, framed by its flaxen hair like wind-blown floss. All frankness ; no play-acting here. None of the abominable tricks and histrionics of her mother.

“Father,” she repeated, “do not break our hearts.”

“Give me a minute,” he said, turned on his heel, and closed the door. Up sprang Josephine, triumphant, and went to repair the damage of the freshets.

For that minute he slammed himself down at his desk. He did not blame himself or his masterfulness. Never in all his life did he think of that as a possible cause of dissensions in his relationships. With all his vision he could not turn round and see the back of his head. But, truth to tell, his masterfulness had had very little to do with Josephine’s conduct. She was made that way, loving pleasure at perhaps too dear a price. He thought of it and cursed her environment—Barras, Therezia, the convent of the Carmelites, the Revolution, everything.

And what could he do? Divorce was out of the question. That he could get, of course, though the circumstantial

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evidence—so painful to one who loved—could never, beyond doubt, prove infidelity. And she would go down, lying charmingly about it, to the grave. But he could not wholly forget his passion, even though she had made herself and him unpleasantly conspicuous, even ridiculous.

Then there was his career—oh, yes, such practical considerations will intrude themselves at emotional moments—and Hortense—Eugène! How could he tell the girl of the conduct of her mother? Or the boy? He had not told him, to defend himself, back in, Cairo. There are things even a conqueror cannot do.

Wearily he turned to the door, called them. They led her in.

With outstretched arms, she came, relying for the moment on the spell her charms had always woven. He saw each one; memories tugged at his heartstrings; then in bitterness he recoiled. Wisely she fell back on being what she was, a naturally affectionate and now very unhappy woman; and her distress melted him where the physical had failed. That nobler expression with which he had once gazed on the slain del Sarra at the altar, on his mother, looking up at her on the stairs, in the old home, now totally changed the admirably cast, but too often relentless, features. He took her in his arms. The others stole out.

“How can I understand you, Josephine?” he asked, sadly looking down at her. “First you trample on my heart; then you make me the laughing-stock of all Paris by allowing others to make love to you.”

“No, not that,” she temporized. “It is gossip. I only allowed the attentions a woman must have.”

“And I gave you none! Come now, Josephine.”

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There were tears. "Stop that!" Seeing he had no use for them, she smiled.

"*Ah ça!* That is better. Of course, you are lying. But how do I know? *Eh bien!* I must forgive you, little one. And we must patch things up."

He took a chestnut tress, fine as spun silk, in his hand.

"And I could have loved you so! Still, we must not talk of that. But give me no cause again. No miserable fops and wagging tongues!" Then, mournfully, he added, "We shall patch things up."

The old century meantime was dying. With the new, Josephine turned over a leaf.

News of the reconciliation reached in due course the house on the rue Rocher. The girls were furious, but Letizia said nothing, except once to Fesch:

"United again! What difference can that make except to avert scandal? He unlocked his heart to her; she locked hers up. And there is the trouble. Now he will retire but the further within himself and draw the bars. This incorrigible self-reliance of his will ruin him."

CHAPTER XVII.

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ALREADY, on his arrival at the port of Fréjus, he had been pretty well aware of conditions; and Joseph and Lucien had further informed him on the way up from Lyons. The old oligarchical Directorate, the corrupt Barras and Moulin, the inefficient Gohier, Roger Ducos, and Merlin, had lost the greater part of Italy and plunged France into a desperate financial condition, with climbing prices, unjust laws, high taxes, and an electorate correspondingly low in spirit. In spite of all the *Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité* inscribed on their pillars and altars, Frenchmen had never really wanted the republic—only what they vaguely guessed as *Liberté*. They had done away with the old régime, owned their little plots, were free of torture and *lettres de cachet*; now they longed for freedom from taxes, from constant upheaval, and from fear of foreign invasion; in short, to be policed.

But the wish was almost unwhispered, for this combination police chief and Messiah could only come through a miracle. And since God had been pretty well left out of the churches, they could not hope for a miracle. It was therefore almost unconsciously that all eyes in France began to turn toward the East, all ears to listen for the

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march of Napoleon's returning legions. He had not guessed so badly when he had prophesied that his absence would make all this quite clear. And as he rode up from the port of Fréjus, it was as though the veil had been suddenly lifted. While the populace shouted its *vivas*, pulled his horses from the shafts, or ran along the road ahead of him with myriad torches, they knew that at last they hailed their savior. It need not take vain-glory and ambition to accept the rôle, when already one has had such abundant proof of others' incompetence.

There was, too, as Joseph told him, a wise old priest ready to play a part. He rather fancied that of Moses the lawgiver; did not count on Napoleon and his brothers making him John the Baptist instead. This was the famous Abbé Sieyès, the only hold-over of the men who ran things in '89, and recently elected a director in Merlin's place.

"The abbé," explained Joseph, "has at last finished that constitution of his on which he has been working for the past ten years, and purposes overthrowing Barras and the other directors to put it into effect."

"And he is looking for a general," further explained Lucien: "Moreau, Masséna, or Jourdan. Bernadotte is also a possibility. He cannot accomplish his *coup d'état* without the military. To-morrow," he added, "I shall bring Sieyès to my house. You can talk things over."

"Not so fast," Napoleon had said, still in the coach, riding northward. "I must not go to him, even at your house. You must bring him to me."

"That can be easily arranged," answered Lucien, now quite tractable, with the glorious prospects in view.

"Not yet. I must study the situation, see where I am.

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For the time I shall stand aloof. That will but make me the more desired.

“And one thing is certain,” he went on decisively. “I will not head any one faction. If we are to judge from that”—he waved toward the torches that made a lane of light through which they rode—“all France is for me. And I must be the united choice of all France.”

The brothers, Joseph gravely, Lucien exultantly, assured him that he was.

“But they are as unstable as their own torches. We shall have to put hurricane-shields around them so that they burn steadily.”

Still, it was with no ignoble satisfaction that he surveyed those flickering torches—and the prospect. All the old ardor for the principles that had illumined his youth had returned to him. He had been disillusioned about the Revolution, the capacity of men for self-government. Never mind; like Charlemagne, he would bring security, freedom, an enlightened rule to his adopted country.

But there were ways and means to be thought of. It takes machinery, manipulation, intrigue, if you will, to bring about even a temporary millennium. Accordingly he set to work, shortly after his return.

In his calls on the directors, who were to be unhorsed, he was affable, self-effacing, letting his victories speak for him. He met Sieyès at Gohier’s, and rather ignored him. It worked. The abbé had a mind that ran smoothly in its narrow grooves. He could devise a constitution that would serve theoretically until Napoleon had given it iron. But in spite of his position, to be avoided aroused the feminine in him. He ran after Napoleon.

And still Napoleon affected an indifference. And when

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the abbé's eagerness showed itself all too plainly on his parchment face lined with innumerable wrinkles as thin as drawn wire, the general said to Lucien:

“Now you may bring him to your house. I, by chance, shall be there.”

It fell out as planned; and Sieyès broached his constitution, also the little *coup d'état*. Napoleon showed just the right amount of detached interest. Affairs were in bad shape, the directors inept, he admitted. Yes, a strong hand was needed to support the statecraft of the abbé. “Why not Moreau? Or is he too dilatory? Bernadotte, Augereau, if they were not so hot-headed.”

“Yourself, general,” said Sieyès, in an agitated whisper, quite as if no one but himself had thought of it before.

“You flatter me, abbé; but I will not be your man, nor any man's man. It must be the voice of France that speaks.”

“Who can doubt that?” said the abbé; then he paused as he wondered just what that meant. But Napoleon merely answered:

“I shall think it over.”

Meanwhile he said little about the abbé's pet constitution except in praise, not, however, committing himself on any specified points. Later he would put in the blood and iron, when he was in the saddle. So he left Sieyès, like John the Baptist, to prepare the way. Completely deceived, the statesman lined up his conspirators in the Council of the Assembly, the Council of the Ancients, and that of the Five Hundred.

Napoleon had another suggestion when the abbé sought him out again—with Lucien.

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“You need,” he said, “a new president in the lower chamber, no erratic Jacobin but some one of known republican principles and eloquent, also fiery, since the members are all young men.” He did not glance at brother Lucien as he spoke; nevertheless the thought was conveyed. Brother Lucien was made president of the Council of the Five Hundred.

Now there were conferences with Fouché. Still Napoleon stalked the boards, like Cincinnatus, firm in his integrity and love of country. The wily Fouché was not fooled by this apparent indifference; but it paid him to appear to be fooled.

“They say, general, that you are the man.”

“Not I,” replied Napoleon. “It is Sieyès’s mess. But it would pay you, Fouché, to side with them. If he doesn’t succeed, some one else will. Your portfolio might become permanent.”

The sandy-haired death’s-head had his answer. The police could be counted on.

Talleyrand too. He had been minister of foreign affairs; had lost the office because of his peculations, particularly a round two hundred thousand dollars he had got from the envoys of the American republic. But he was invaluable.

“You are necessary to save France,” vouchsafed the general; “the king-pin of the new government.”

“The king-pin’s king-pin,” replied Talleyrand, taking snuff.

“Possibly,” replied Napoleon, looking a little annoyed. “But I can think of less distinguished and less lucrative offices!” And this time, too, nobody was fooled.

Cambacérès, Lebrun, Caulaincourt, it was found,

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could also be counted on; and Admiral Bruix of the marines, and most of the ranking generals of the army. Only Lefebvre, Bernonville, and Bernadotte in especial, held aloof, despite the most diplomatic soundings-out and advances. Thus Sieyès and his two brothers reported; so Napoleon himself undertook the work, with great discretion and apparent casualness. In vain; Bernadotte did not want to be "permanent" minister of war. "Evidently," remarked Talleyrand, "he wants to be that king-pin of which I am to be king-pin." Bernadotte was *not* acquainted with the plot.

But it was all ticklish business, this stealing a government, so ticklish, in fact, that Talleyrand and Napoleon, two nights before the event, had quite a scare. They were seated in the former abbé's study when suddenly they heard shouts without and a pounding at the door. Discovery? Arrest? Again the guillotine? Talleyrand blanched though he preserved his smile. Napoleon did not blanch, but he felt none too comfortable. They snuffed the candles, stole to the window. *Bah!* a crowd of rowdies around a broken-down carriage! The cause was saved, but Napoleon was chagrined. It was too much like burlesque. He had appeared to better advantage on the battle-field.

So the day set, the eighteenth of Brumaire (appropriately named the month of fog), arrived. In the Council of the Ancients, Sieyès had his men in hand, and Lucien his in the Council of the Five Hundred. It was a great moment for Lucien!

Also Fouché had his police stationed at critical points in the purlieus, while several army battalions lounged on their muskets in the environs of the palace. Others, too,

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were near at hand. Not to-day would the Sections march on the Tuilleries; the odds were too hopeless. Besides they knew little of what was afoot. None the less the resolution was introduced and passed, the resolution to move the seat of government away from the “hysterical populace of Paris to the safer sanctuary of St.-Cloud”! General Bonaparte was directed to command the escorting troops; and the directors were caught napping.

Meantime Napoleon had risen, long before the sun. He had issued an innocent invitation, the night before, to a number of the generals to take an early breakfast with him in the morning. Already several were here, Murat, Lannes, and the loyal conspirators in the preponderant majority, but also a few of the disaffected. Bernadotte, a tall *Béarnais* with a complexion as swarthy as a Moor’s, and a raven lock of hair falling over his coal-black eyes, had gone upstairs, by special invitation, to his chief’s study. The rest basked in the radiance of Madame la Générale’s smile.

“You, General Lefebvre here; General Bernonville there, *s'il vous plaît*; and General Bourrienne by my side.” So, like a true helpmeet, she placed the reluctant.

“General Bernadotte will be down directly. He is up with *le générale en chef* in his cabinet.” Then, aside to Bourrienne: “See if you can’t bring them down. He can do nothing with him.” Which was as much as to say, she might.

Ascending the stairs, he could hear his chief hectoring the fiery Moor.

“Why,” came that rapid voice, “are you not in uniform?”

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“I only wear my uniform when I am on duty,” in sullen tones.

“*Que diable!* You shall have duty enough this morning!” and to Bourrienne as he opened the door, “He might as well have come in slippers!”

Napoleon composed himself, however, when later they sat down at the table; and so agreeable was he, so delightful Josephine’s throaty voice, with its modulations as sweetly variable as the undulations of her body, that the disgruntled generals did not notice that many officers had been arriving, also many civic celebrities. The entry outside, the staircase, were crowded, and they had overflowed into the little garden.

Suddenly Bernadotte discovered it, and rising to his full height—a splendid figure of a man—at the same time upsetting his coffee, he exclaimed:

“Ah! I see it all now. This military club meeting is the cover for another *coup d'état!*”

“No matter, general,” said Josephine, trying her best to be helpful. “It will come out. What a good thing it isn’t your uniform!”

And now Napoleon was speaking, with all the old impetuous vibrance the Moor remembered from many a battle-field.

“If so, what of it, citizen general? But no, we will away with the if. Our cards lie on the table. This morning we ride to establish a new government. France has too long been the prey of spoilers.”

“That I do not admit,” responded the sullen Moor.

At once there was a hubbub from Junot, Murat, all the loyal aides, who growled angrily as they surrounded Bernadotte.

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“Silence!” and their chief’s eyes blazed. “I will handle this situation, gentlemen.” Then he softened, wore once more his old smile, its charm now ~~not~~ untouched with melancholy and reproach.

“Bernadotte, my old comrade, you served under me in Italy. Think—remember! Then when you have recalled the dangers we have shared together, throw in your fortunes with us for France!”

The Moor remained silent.

“You will desert us then? But the army is with me. See for yourself.” And seizing his little hat and great-coat, he strode into the garden to a salvo of cheers.

“You see, Bernadotte? Others trust me. Why not you and you, Lefebvre, and Bernonville? Ah, excellent, Lefebvre. I knew you would not desert me at the pinch.”

So, surrounded on all sides by the loyal staff, Bernadotte shrugged his shoulders and yielded in so far as to promise “to await events” at the rue Rocher with Joseph, as Bonaparte had adroitly suggested.

And just as this last and most formidable enemy was removed, into the garden bright with late blooming flowers and the gay uniforms, came the messengers of the Assembly.

“*Citoyen le général en chef*, the Council of Ancients requests your presence to take the oath and escort them to the Palace of St.-Cloud.”

The play was on; and, at the cue, Murat’s dragoons rode up the street, brave in their array of green coats, white epaulets, and shining casques with red pompons, gilt chin-straps, and black mare’s-tail plumes streaming in the crisp morning breeze.

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The citizens of Paris, now on their way to work, had seldom seen, even at a review, so many famous soldiers gathered together. There were exclamations of astonishment, but many more cheers, particularly for the little man at the head, as the bright cavalcade clattered and jangled over the cobbles to the Carrousel and the palace of the kings.

Into this Napoleon strode quite as he had into his garden; and his stride had the effect of a possessive pronoun. But smile as you might at some pompous action, one never smiled in his face. And the Ancients in the Salle de la Liberté did not smile as he mounted the tribune, facing the crescents of green-draped seats, the marble pillars and bronze capitals, the semicircle of boxes, and the towering statue of Liberty at the end of the hall. And no one caught, between statue and conqueror, the least sign of a wink.

His oath was more successful than his address, for in taking the oath he adroitly managed to avoid swearing fealty to the old constitution, which freed his conscience from embarrassment, but his speech struck no one favorably. Now, his sentences on the field of battle had a most compelling sonority; to the ambassadors of Montebello and the beys of Cairo he had spoken with suavity and pith; but this morning his vague exposition, his generalities about sacred liberty, were something of a jumble; and too much of staccato crept into his tones. Perhaps an unreceptive audience was to blame; with conspirators and latter-day Jacobins watching each other, all this oratory seemed a waste of time. But then the tribune was a new experience for him; and even the most exalted genius can be afflicted with stage-fright. At any

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rate, when he had finished, he was chagrined; and since he never did anything badly without wanting to try it again, when he caught sight of Bottot, as he left the hall, he decided to use the poor fellow as a text.

This Bottot was the envoy of the directors—in particular, Barras's tool—and none of the directors was at hand. Barras was at home, fearing the end. Too much dalliance had sent a slow paralysis creeping into his brain; and he was trying feebly to shave himself. Gohier and Moulin were consoling each other, somewhere, over coffee; Ducos did not matter, since he was Sieyès's man; and Sieyès himself, wanting to make a good appearance when he rode in triumph by Bonaparte's side—or, rather, a little ahead—was practising horsemanship in the Bois. So Napoleon, standing on the steps leading from the courtyard into the palace, poured the vials of France's wrath (and his own) against these unjust stewards—the directors—on poor Bottot's head.

“What have you done”—so his voice rang through the court—“with this France so brilliant when I intrusted her to your care? I left you in peace; I return and find you at war. I left you victories, and I come back to hear of defeat. I left you the millions of Italy, and I see spoliation and misery everywhere”—and so on; it was much better than the speech from the tribune. Here, before those casques and shakos and the fringing crowd, he was on his native heath. And his voice could carry; it rang through the courts, and the walls seemed to echo it and the cheers, as he left poor Bottot, mounted his splendid black, and rode up and down the ranks adding other indictments in like strain.

Then the resignations came in—forced, of course, but

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none the less resignations—from Moulin and Gohier. When Talleyrand brought in Barras's, Napoleon's personal triumph seemed complete. He seldom cherished grudges, but he had never forgiven Barras; and now the old rake had paid.

That night and the next day were anxious times for Letizia, with the two boys at St.-Cloud. Even an eight-year-old child had memories of the Terror; and one false step, and Lucien and Napoleon might account to the guillotine. More than ever, as she sat by the window, waiting for news, did the game seem scarce worth the candle. And, indeed, on the following day, things did not come off so well.

Behind the peaceful gray walls of the old château, set in its placid park, the Ancients had gathered in the Hall of Apollo; the younger Five Hundred, with brother Lucien as president, in the orangery, overlooking the flower-beds. Now, with the suspense, the conspirators among these legislators began to grow faint of heart; and the Jacobins were fast assuming the upper hand. Still, Lucien was happy. He was no longer sitting on a wine-barrel, shooing rats and signing vouchers. He had been right in throwing up Napoleon's jobs. To-day his brother would see.

Upstairs, suspicious eyes were on Napoleon—Bourrienne, his secretary, Minister of Police Fouché, and Talleyrand—all for him at the time, because of their own precious careers, yet secretly resentful of his domination and eager to find the fatal flaw at which they might sneer in private and thus reward him for the honors they received at his hands. Still, he had need of them, so perhaps it was all a fair trade.

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And they thought they saw ground for their suspicions. There was no denying that the 'little general' was nervous. It was not cold, yet he kept on his greatcoat and warmed his hands at the fire. They talked this over afterward; also they decided that somewhat mumbled was his third speech, made to the Ancients, who sat, scarce knowing where they were, with the Directory dissolved and nothing yet to take its place.

He may have felt trepidation, but he never faltered when, after the speech to the upper chamber, he left for the orangery and, cries of "Outlaw him!" "Down with him!" "Dictator!" followed him down the stairs. Into the orangery, now in an uproar, he plunged direct, with only three at his side. He was surrounded, pulled about, then struck by some one's fist. Slight of frame, he was dragged by the taller togas this way and that—struck again; blood flowed from his cheek. He tried to speak—in vain—nothing could be heard above the clamor, not even old Augereau's bellow demanding a vote, or Lucien striving to quell the disorder and reach his brother's side. There was nothing to do but retreat; and out to his troops he went, where Junot, Leclerc, Murat, waited, eager for a try at those red togas.

"Pale," decided Bourrienne, taking a mental note for his diary. Perhaps Napoleon was, and with blood on his cheek, but his first thought was not for himself. He sent a squad of dragoons in to rescue brother Lucien.

"He hesitates," again noted his secretary. However, Napoleon was thinking fast. It would have been easy to mount his horse and order his troops in; but though parliamentary procedure could no longer be observed, he wanted to preserve a semblance—for bulletins and

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for history. So he waited for Lucien, who now appeared.

“Address them, Lucien, in your official capacity. Joachim”—he turned to Murat—“get him a horse.”

The bold Lucien needed no cue. Leaping on the borrowed steed, he rode down the ranks.

“I, as president of the Council of Five Hundred, assure you that the majority of the Assembly live in constant terror of ruffians, who with daggers prevent the course of legislation and threaten us with death. These assassins do not represent the people of France but violence and the guillotine.”

He would have said more; but his voice was swallowed up in the roar that greeted a little man who now made his appearance, with his round hat down over his forehead, a torn sash, and blood on his cheek. That blood was sacred, a crimson banner to the soldiers. “*Vive mon général!*” “The Little Corporal!” “Remember Arcola!” “They have tried to kill him. We shall kill them to the last man!”

He held up his hand, signaled to Murat, and the bugle sounded. Then a surge-like movement in the ranks, and the grenadiers were across the court and up the steps. Bayonets pricked the now twilit spaces of the halls—also the breeches under the red togas of the Jacobin senators. Off came the red cloaks; they huddled in a corner; while, below, the dispersed Jacobins of the Five Hundred tumbled out of the windows of the orangery on to the flower-beds.

The drama had been turned into a kind of burlesque. Still, that was to be expected. If he had the habit of showing up strong men as weak, certainly he could show

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up knaves as cravens. But now promptly he turned it to drama again, for Lucien assembled a rump parliament; and the new government was declared, with Bonaparte, Roger Ducos, and Sieyès as provisional consuls. Afterward an election was declared; and poor cat's-paw Sieyès was left out in the cold, Lebrun and Cambacérès being returned, with Napoleon as first consul for ten years. And he sat down to the making of some reactionary, but many more wise and enlightened, laws.

So he became the first man, Josephine the first lady, in France, and, so many thought, the first in all the world. The referendum at the election had been cleverly put. Still, since more than three million of these who were qualified to vote were for him and only fifteen hundred and sixty against—Lafayette and Bernadotte making it exactly fifteen hundred and sixty-two—he had some slight ground for suspecting that he knew what the people wanted, that he was the people's choice.

With the new century he and Josephine took over the old residence of the kings.

CHAPTER XVIII

Josephine Plays Billiards at the Tuileries

JOSEPHINE found life in the Tuileries very pleasant. It was thrilling to walk in the footsteps of kings, to look out of their windows with the full sense of ownership, to be courtesied to where they had been courtesied to, and to sleep where they had lain. And there were so many balls and receptions, dinners for two hundred covers in the Gallery of Diana, and great closets full of new gowns. But this transition from republican simplicity to royal splendor had to be made adroitly. Like skilful singers they went with the utmost smoothness from one register into another; and the maid or two of the rue Chantereine were increased but to three or four, with a chef and a valet and few culinary domestics, before the whole flock appeared, of ladies in waiting, *dames du palais*, butlers and pages, prefects and carvers, "chefs of the service," guards, chamberlains, and grooms of the chamber. The sibilant "citizen" must slide into the "Sire" without any perceptible hiss or slur.

Indeed, Napoleon did not hear the "Sire" all at once, even in that inner ear. Amid his blossoming generals he still wore the simple green coat of a colonel of his chasseurs. And it was with difficulty that Josephine persuaded him to try that magnificent thing of crimson

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silk with gold oak-leaves and laurel all down the front. Still, she was persistent, and it had been presented by a leading manufacturer of Lyons.

“*Diable!*” he said with a shrug of his shoulders. “Put it on. It may encourage the trade in silk!” But the very donning of it by so Spartan a soldier was proof to some that no angel was whispering in his ear but rather that dark ambassador whose name he had just taken in vain.

As for Josephine, she could be acquitted of royalistic designs. And on designs dynastic Nature herself frowned. Julie, her sister-in-law, had gone to Plombières to take the waters; and came back quite plump and *enceinte*, promptly to present Joseph, now councilor of state and minister plenipotentiary, with a pink little daughter. Since this was after ten years of barrenness for Julie, Josephine determined to try the waters too. She returned more gracefully slender than ever, and once and for all decided that she did not want to be a queen. They could forgo the scepter and crown.

Meantime, however, they had settled down to trotting very amiably in double harness. How amiably may be judged from an indictment she brought against him one afternoon as they looked out from Marie Antoinette’s old windows on the horse-chestnut fans.

“You have only two faults,” said she, very charmingly.
“And they?”

“The first, that you are so fond of argument with those who surround you that you betray your inmost thoughts.” And, laconic as he might be in battle, she knew from Bourrienne’s babbling that the charge was true.

“You must beware of Fouché, Savary, and Talleyrand,” she went on. “As for the second fault, it is that

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you do not give enough of *yourself* to your friends. You cannot win them forever by giving them baubles and titles."

And though he might have heeded with profit, he had laughed, tweaked her cheek, and as promptly forgotten, for he had an engagement—at Marengo.

But despite her intuitions, she did not understand her husband, seeing him, for the most part, in a woman's terms—his moods, levees, and red coats.

Once it occurred to her to try to see, with a man's eyes, this master of men. She was playing billiards in the *entresol*, from which could be seen the rising monuments and buildings coming down for the new boulevards. Her companion, since there were no others about this night, was the dapper, meager Louis Wairy, better known as Constant, her husband's valet.

She tried an easy carom and failed. "*Dame!*" she exclaimed. She must talk to some one or be hopelessly bored. "So, Constant," she said as she dismounted from the cushioned table where she had perched, "you were at Marengo."

The bait served all too well, but she checked his rush for it. "Nay, nay, my valiant valet; not your own exploits! I would know what the general looked like—how he appeared in battle; what was his glance under fire."

"Fearful, madame! But he was so merry when he shaved. He would not let me shave him; but I handed him his razors and clipped the little hairs in his nose. How he swore when the scissors tickled him! But I take good care of him, madame, the very best care; see that he has the right underclothes—always the finest cassimere, and—"

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“Hairs in his nose! Underclothes!” exclaimed his mistress. “And I ask you how he appears in battle! Constant, you have the valet’s soul.”

“Well, madame, he talked to the monks in the hospice of St. Bernard. They marveled at his wisdom. Then with his men he slid down the glaciers like a boy.”

“What! On a sled?”

“Non, madame. He sat right down on the ice. How many pairs of good cassimere he spoiled!”

It was hopeless, and she turned to the window. Two officers walked over the court with much jingling of spurs.

“Eoe! Rapp! Junot! Come in and save me from this haberdasher!” Then, as they entered the chamber, “I ask this fellow how the first consul appears at Marengo; and he tells me that he spoils his breeches coasting down glaciers!”

“He did, *Madame la Première Consule*,” assented the smiling Rapp. “A little device to cheer on his men. There were many such.”

“Allons donc! *Monsieur le Général*, you are no better. What I want to know is how he appears in battle. I have never attended one.”

“You should see him, then, to see war at its most glorious,” broke in Junot. He had a brave uniform, side-burns like Louis; his eyes were near together, his mouth rather petulant for so brave a warrior, and he was to die in a madhouse; but he had spirit and dash enough on the field. This was echoed now as exultantly he spoke in praise of his chief: “Even with grape falling like hail all around him, his horse shot under him, he is cool. He knows not fear!”

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“If *Madame la Première Consule* will permit,” eagerly put in Constant; “I have undressed him and—”

“What? Underclothes again!”

“No, madame. It is of wounds I speak. His body is covered with scars.”

“That is characteristic,” said Rapp tersely, as he rearranged the billiard-balls. “He always conceals his hurts from his men.”

Junot, sensitive and demonstrative as a woman, dashed the tears from his eyes with the back of a hairy hand. “He conceals them even from me,” he said, almost with a touch of reproach; then he resumed:

“I have said he was cool and laconic, not arguing as he does with his councilors here. But suddenly he speaks, and when he does, there is no general or dragoon but obeys. His voice itself sweeps you on like a mountain torrent. And his glance? I know not how to describe it, madame. But it is as though something cold like steel and yet on fire suddenly flashed from a scabbard. He is a little man. With one push you could bowl him over. Yet you run—and toward the enemy!”

Josephine thought that now she was getting the feel of it all; but she was mystified by the handsome Rapp, who, whistling the while, for he scorned all etiquette, was arranging balls, cues, and pieces of chalk on the table.

“It takes more than magnetism to win battles,” he said. “There is strategy.” Then he took down more balls. “Now, here you have the whole field of the second Italian campaign. Perhaps, madame, you can catch its grandeur of design.”

Puzzled, she drew nearer, as Rapp went on:

“This will make it easier to understand. The northwest

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corner of the table is France; north center, Switzerland; northeast here, Austria; and below lies Italy.

“Between are the Alps—these cues. Note that they form an impassable barrier. Below these Alps are the Austrian forces—those white balls—scattered over the whole Lombard plain. They have won it back while the general was in Egypt, all except Genoa and two towns on the coast where are our Masséna and Suchet with their few detachments—those pieces of chalk—practically bottled up.

“Now, the first consul is in Switzerland. He has not much of an army, only thirty-five thousand patched-up troops, having generously sent on his best corps to Moreau on the Rhine. But, then, poor troops with Napoleon are better than picked ones with Moreau; and Lannes, Desaix, Victor, under the first consul’s direction, are whipping them into shape.

“Very well. He has four courses open; and here you must catch the first point, the strategy of the position he had chosen. He could do so many things: help Moreau on the Rhine against the North Austrian army; climb over the Alps by the eastern pass and so sweep the Tyrol; or, by the western pass, join Masséna on the coast; but that he cannot go over, oh, no!”

“But he—” Junot started to protest.

“Do not interrupt,” expostulated Rapp. “I’ll leave all the glory of warfare to you. This is cold strategy. Now the way by the coast is comparatively easy, and the one his generals in council expect him to take.

“‘But,’ says the first consul, ‘that is my ’96 campaign all over again. I must have a new one to surprise them.

“‘Besides, if I join Masséna on the west I shall face

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the whole Austrian army scattered over the Italian plain in superior numbers, with their base, Austria, at their back, and my back to the sea. I shall choose the middle pass!'

"'But, general,' say all the staff, including the growling Junot here, 'you cannot. St. Bernard is impassable!'

"'Tiens! what dictionary do you use? The word is not in mine. There we shall cross, catch them between the west and their base, defeat their superior corps one by one. Further, we shall capture Milan, which will give us prestige with the Italians and a tremendous moral advantage.'

"And this he did with his small army; hollowed out tree-trunks to carry his cannon; attached to each cables drawn by a hundred men. And when they grew tired and gazed, disheartened, at the icy ascent, the peaks all around like some gigantic *chevaux de frise* of the gods, he treads alongside of them, cheering them on, slapping their backs, or orders the drums to beat to stir the blood. For this purpose, too, he slid down the glaciers like a school-boy and spoiled Constant's good breeches.

"As I said, there were many such devices. His brain is fertile. When we come to Mount Albredo, which really puts the 'impassable' in his dictionary, and has a fort at the foot commanding the only road, he covers the cannon wheels with straw, also the horses' hoofs, and sends them through by night.

"And now watch—he is over—in Italy! He strikes—and very swiftly he can strike—first this division here, that one there, all over the Lombard plain; fools them all. No let-up; fight, march, fight, then march again. He leaves garrisons behind—more of those pieces of chalk

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on the green—at Milan, Ivrea, Lodi, every town; then crosses the Po, all the time sending out feelers for the main body of Melas, the Austrian chief.

“Now he splits his forces, sends Lannes to Montebello, Desaix south, while he continues westward, leaving all points in his rear strategically covered and thereby diminishing his forces. Then suddenly, in the vale of Marengo, where the river Tanaro flows into the Po, he comes up with Melas.”

“With triple our numbers,” interpolated Junot, whose eyes dilated as he relived it all.

“No, double; but it was enough,” retorted the cooler Rapp, as he rearranged his little symbols.

“And now consider the table no longer the whole field of operations, but just that of the immediate battle. Here you have the town of Marengo, cut in two by a little river with very steep banks. Our inferior forces have been driven out, but we reform and try to recapture it. Gaily we go on, not in straight platoons, madame, as at your reviews, but in waves, the bravest at the apex; and debouch through the narrow streets. At the same time, young Kellermann organizes a little charge of horse on the banks through the orchard just outside the town. But the whitecoats are strongly intrenched. They pour on us a murderous fire from houses and church towers. Young and old, we go down; some leaning up against lintels, others prone in the gutters, or sprawled on their backs, all in very strange postures, madame, quite as if they had been sacks and mattresses tossed from the windows with contents ripped open. Only, instead of straw and feathers on the stones, you had *other* things, in which we slipped and slid as we raced back from the little river.

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“Meantime, on our right, the enemy guns sprayed Kellermann’s dragoons as they stormed through the orchards. We had lost all our cannon but five and could not support them. Here, too, were queer postures; stranger perhaps, since beasts are more easily stricken with terror: horses plunging distracted, or in their frenzy rearing straight up; others tumbled against walls, with their riders crumpled under them, or trumpeting through the orchards, saddles under and their masters dragged by the stirrups; and still others, legs in air, flat on their backs, and shattered open. Such, madame, is the glory of warfare, a picture of battle to which you say you have never been invited.

“Four times that morning we retreated from Marengo. Four times, taking such shelter as we could from farmhouse or grove, we advanced again. The last time, Napoleon came up at a gallop to exhort us and order in his Consular Guard. We cheered. At last we were saved. And in they plunged, like an ocean breaker—curling fore legs, coats of green, and the sunlight of gilt casques and chin-straps interlaced in the white foam of their plumes.

“But down the steep banks they, too, go floundering, only four hundred at a mad gallop coming back. After all, the day is not saved. Can it be that our chief has lost his luck, that he is no longer the conqueror?

“Still, he stands immovable, his eyes ranging the valley, as we gather on a hill for the last stand; Marmont’s five baby guns on the left; our foot in the center; on the left, a little way off, Kellermann’s heavy dragoons. And from the village toward us, a fine sight with their banners flying and band instruments glinting in the sun, come the Austrians.

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“Ah! There is dust floating around the green shoulder of that neighboring hill. Desaix! Up from the south. The chief gallops to meet him as on up the slopes march the whitecoats, like league-long rakes with their bayonets, and the teeth all toward us. We fire—teeth are gone from the rakes again—more teeth missing. But there are legions more coming on. And now the chief speaks—a few curt words—one short swift gesture—and Marmont’s guns, reinforced, roar on our right, catching them on the flank; our muskets rattle in front; and Kellermann’s horse plunge in, catching them full on the other hip.

“The sun, sitting on the white towers of the church, is red now. It seems reflected on the hill as the columns, torn by grape and mangled by saber, fall back down the slope, race through the orchards, by houses and church, and on to the little river. And again Napoleon is master—all Italy rewon!

“A pinch of luck, some say, Desaix coming up. No bigger than the pinch that falls to all commanders. He mixes his ingredients, counting on it. If Desaix had not come, he would have *made* his own luck. He always can.”

“But did he not say something fine on the field?” asked Josephine.

“Ah! brave words to thrill the ladies and sentimental fire-eaters like Junot,” retorted the handsome but brusque officer. “He did—something about, ‘Remember, my boys, it is your commander’s habit to sleep on the battle-field!’ He has said better things, some which even this cool head has thrilled to. But the words do not matter, nor even the battle which I have tried to make vivid to please a lady’s whim. It is the strategy; the whole sweep of the

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campaign, the grandeur of design; so many objectives in one! Can you not see?"

Josephine could not. She thought these pictures of battle and her husband rather fearsome. She still preferred him at levees and in red coats. Perhaps she better understood this strange man she had married when Rapp spoke of the death of Desaix whom Napoleon loved.

"For hours," Rapp said, "he seldom spoke. When he did, he would talk of nothing else, not even victory. 'Desaix,' he would remark mournfully, 'was an antique character, the last of Plutarch's men!'"

Junot, Josephine observed, seemed jealous that such affection could not have been bestowed on him. "Poor Junot!" she said to herself, and, to show her sympathy, clung to his arm as they left the room, though the candid Rapp was far more handsome.

But if the tactics of victory Josephine could not grasp, the externals were easily understood; the balls, for instance, when she entered on his arm to receive the tribute of the generals and their wives, many of low degree and a little awkward in their new-won splendor. She did not stay now to dance or flirt, but, on his arm, would make a turn of the room, pausing as he chatted amiably with this favorite or that, or chided some woman for her too forward dress. "Put on more!" he would say. "I will have none of the vices of the old régime. No woman shall go half clad and no man boast of his conquests."

Then there were the reviews which she watched from the serene windows; at her side, throngs of ambassadors and famous soldiers, fine ladies, too, from every land in the world. No longer was the courtyard crowded with ragged trousers and stocking caps; it blossomed with

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color like the ranged flower-beds on the other side of the palace. Each uniform had been a matter of profound study to quartermasters, generals, and even the wives of the generals, all striving to invent some still more startling combination. Laurette Permon, now Madame Junot, was quite set up over the adoption of her wonderful idea for a shapka.

In solid ranks the platoons marched by, the long lines of legs rising and falling in unison, chins and torsos as immovable as if yoked together. So they passed through the court of the Louvre, the arch of the clock tower, and the Carrousel, or were ranged against the quiet background of the old palace; first blue coats with crimson collars, then green with white breeches, again green with red-strapped trousers. And now the horse-artillery in pink with fur-lined coats over their shoulders, and plumed dolmaned hussars with trousers of braided blue; and an infinite variety of head-gear: *chapeaux* with tricolored rosettes; black-vizored shakos with long plumes of white; the gold casques of the dragoons, with glittering chin-straps; black shapkas with yellow pompons; the *éclaireurs'* furred calpacs; and lancers' shapkas shaped like inverted hour-glasses, with aigrets and red pompons rising above.

But the brightest flowers in this garden of Mars were Messieurs Duroc, Murat, and Bessières.

For Bessières wore a green coat with red lapels, a mighty plume of gray on his gilt-bordered *chapeau*, and an old-rose sash; Murat, gigantic plumes of beet-red over a scarlet collar and coat of imperial blue, a gilt belt of intricate gold figures, a lavender sash, and ox-blood saddle-skirts. This rather pleased the bold cavalry com-

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mander and his lady Caroline, *née* Bonaparte. But Duroc, poor man, was ill at ease with the huge gilt tassel on his shapka and that orchid aigret; a black coat hidden under gold lacings and gilt boutonnieres; gold figures like chevrons on his sleeves; red trousers with olive-green embroidery; and a gray fur-lined pelisse with a sky-blue underside falling over an ocher-hued saddle, with tassels flying from the skirts.

Not that he did not look every inch the soldier, but he was a stern fellow, of quiet though elegant tastes; and he envied his chief's plain green coat with its single decoration, and the old round hat shoved so carelessly forward. Indeed he objected at first, but Napoleon had said:

“You do not like it, Duroc. No more do I. But it will please the French. They are fierce and fickle like their ancestors, the Gauls, and do not long for liberty or equality. They prefer ribbons and honors. See how they bow down before the stars and garters of the English. That is why I established the Legion of Honor, to give them stars and garters of their own. These things I could not say in open council. But you, Duroc, are a man of sense. Yes, my brave and long-suffering comrade, you must wear it, every aiguillette and tassel!”

Nor was it all parade. The little commander was everywhere, now on his splendid black, now striding up and down the ranks with vibrant exhortation, again calling out some veteran to be honored. Sometimes his aides would post him in advance about the candidate's record; but usually his own remarkable memory served. And he loved it all; would keep them for hours in the court as he examined equipment; and handled every sword, lance, or musket as affectionately as a trout-fisher his rods.

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Josephine had another opportunity to observe her husband and gage him with the eyes of men; an opportunity which, as it turned out, she later regretted.

She had persuaded Fouché to escort her to a secret gallery above the hall where the Corps Législatif was discussing the new Code, which, more than his monuments and pageants, was to immortalize her husband's name. That she chose such a guide as the minister of police should have occasioned comment; but Josephine, though she filled her new position with grace and tact, never showed the same fastidiousness in her choice of companions that she did in manners and dress. All, men particularly, were to be used by a lovely lady.

So, laughing musically, she ascended the stairs to the little cubbyhole, and they eavesdropped, the sandy-haired death's-head cheek by jowl with her blue eyes and the tortoise-shell comb set in the chestnut coils, lustrous even in the dusk of the gallery. Through crevices cunningly concealed in the acanthus leaves of the cornice, they gazed down on the councilors in the crescent rows; on the two associate consuls, Cambacérès with his Miltonic mouth and long pointed nose, Lebrun with his small features like little continents in relief on an ocean of chin and cheek; then on the little man presiding, who galvanized all.

Gone now was the jaundiced complexion, the frailty, even the rapier-like wiriness of the Egyptian campaign. "See, Fouché," she said, "how he has filled out. A hundred francs to fifty that in the year he shows the paunch."

And there he sat, facing the councilors restive in their seats, the lady with the tortoise-shell comb and his minister of police hidden behind the cornice, and taking stock

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of morals, felonies, and misdemeanors as enthusiastically as ever he had of items of ordnance. Quite argumentative he was too, as he read the measure rapidly, as swiftly seized on its salient points, now commented on them with a little of reactionary stubbornness, again with the soundest of common sense, and occasionally with a little of nonsense to relieve the tedium. "Ah! Mr. Lawyer, I have you there!"—this with the boyish satisfaction he showed in taking tricks at *reversi*. And a moment later, quite arbitrarily, "Come, come, I am not such an idiot as to believe that!" This body of learned men he had gathered together was a steed to be ridden. For all his cajoleries, one never lost the sense of his iron hand on the reins and a most vise-like clamp of the knee.

"They are taking up," explained Fouché, "the laws for adoption, marriage, and divorce."

"Come, come," Napoleon was again saying. "Who will plead the cause of the unmarried? Will you, Citizen Cambacérès?"

And Cambacérès, a notorious and cautious bachelor, bowed and protested that they were coming dangerously near to taxing celibacy; but Napoleon had returned to study of the document in his hand.

"Adoption is only a false way of completing an unfruitful marriage," he declared more soberly. "It must not, therefore, be open to the unmarried. Adoption must make the adopted a member of the family. Otherwise you lower it to the level of bastardy."

At the word "unfruitful" the listening lady had pricked up her ears. Then to cover her dismay, she whispered: "Why stay? This is all Greek to me."

"Better stay," answered Fouché. "Soon they will come

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to more intelligible things"; meaning, "Things, dear lady, that will bear more directly on your case."

"Also," the rapid voice of Napoleon went on, "you will diminish the number of marriages. For why should people marry if they can have children without the expense and inconvenience of marriage? If adoption is approved, it must be only as a supplement to marriage. And the adopted must in all cases be under age. No especial privileges for you, Citizen Cambacérès."

Flaws in the section on nullification now came up; and Cambacérès had a case for point.

"Suppose," he said, "a soldier returns after ten years. He expects to marry his affianced cousin, who is rich; but this cousin's guardian substitutes his own daughter instead. Where would be your consent in such a case?"

"You must not," shot back the first consul, "consider marriage only as a matter of business. The dowry is a mere incident. The true union of husband and wife is the important point."

This noble sentiment was all that Josephine could pick out from the confusion of technicalities; and her face accordingly brightened. Even in the dusk of the gallery Fouché could see that. But now Napoleon had nailed another clause.

"This, through omission, is all wrong," he declared. "The bride should realize that she is passing from the guardianship of her father to that of her husband. The official at the ceremony should in all cases exact a promise of such obedience. Yet you have provided no such formula. Even the priests had one; and, though the bride and groom, being human, may not have listened, all the bridal party heard and were impressed. Write it in.

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“Now ought we not to add that the wife ought not to see persons of whom her husband disapproves?”

Up aloft, the tortoise-shell comb turned to the death’s-head. “It is a great advantage, is it not,” she said, “personally to make all the laws?”

But already the unsuspecting husband was deep in another and more pertinent subject, the causes for divorce.

“You seize on adultery as the one important cause, when adultery is no phenomenon. In the civil code it has a portentous sound; in real life it seems to be a gallantry, the episode of a masked ball. Yet the way you stress it, one would think it the only cause of marital unhappiness. And you wholly overlook incompatibility, allowing for that mere separation.

“Now, nothing is more disastrous than an unhappy marriage or a discreditable divorce. But mere separation can be quite as bad, for often both relatives and children suffer. And the worst cases of all are where the wife continues to lead an immoral life while she still bears her husband’s name. Each day he hears people say such and such things about her, each a fresh outrage.

“Therefore incompatibility, as a cause, has this advantage: if a woman has been unfaithful during her husband’s absence, he can use the plea without publicly discrediting her character.” (The tortoise-shell comb was very still now. “Heavens!” thought the lonely head that wore it, “why will he hammer these things in?”)

“Or again, he may morally know that she has committed adultery without legal proof. To sum up, I hold that separation, which is here allowed for incompatibility, inflicts a worse penalty than divorce without any com-

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pensating advantages. At least so you have constructed your provisions.

“And we must consider the children. I can understand the feelings of those who apply for a divorce after a number of years, but only where there are no children. Marriages are made by convenience and are hallowed only by time. True, even with time, certain ties can never be cemented. But I cannot understand the man who applies for divorce when his wife has given him children. Therefore it should be written in, that divorce should be allowed for incompatibility or adultery *only* where there are no children and during the first ten years only. And no person may claim a second divorce, for that would be debasing marriage.

“And finally, Mr. Secretary, change the wording of this sentence I have marked. The way you have it practically makes the husband say, ‘I shall marry and change my mind when I choose, while my wife is married for life.’ It should be assumed that men and women, when they marry, expect to be married for life.”

The westering sun shone through the lofty windows, revealing the dancing dust-notes and scattering patterns of gold on the fair olive of the listener’s cheek. But still, down the line he went—through age-limits, impotence, bastardy, and six-months children.

“When do physicians hold that life enters the body?”

“At six months, Monsieur le Premier Consul; but if born then, the child cannot survive.”

“Dame! I should hold a child mine if born at six months. Write it in, Mr. Secretary: A husband cannot disavow a child after a period of one hundred and eighty-six days.”

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Uncle Fesch should have seen him now. Truly he was sitting in palaces, making laws, and issuing his mandates; also disposing, with a few swift words, of the future of millions of his subjects; and incidentally, Josephine thought, of his destiny and hers. The abbé might have enjoyed it. She did not. "Unfruitful"; "divorce"; "incompatibility"; "persons a husband disapproves"; "infidelity during a husband's absence"; "each a fresh outrage"—all the words and phrases her fears had caught at now rang in her ears. His judgments had perhaps been detached and impartial; but to her each seemed to betray a design. And why did Fouché simper so idiotically? She could stand it no longer. With her handkerchief at her lips to choke back the sobs, she left the gallery.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Glory of the Consulate

NO, poor Josephine could not altogether understand her husband; no more indeed than any lady so adorably feminine can understand one so essentially masculine. But if she did not pause to admire, the world did, gasping its huzzas or its equally flattering envy and hatred, as he crowded these shining years of the Consulate with an array of deeds such as no man, within the same span, ever accomplished before. Conqueror and statesman, the man of business as well, there was no department of national life that did not feel the impress of his hand. As the *alcade* of a Basque town, the *maire* of a hamlet paternally looks after the welfare of his children, in short, has a finger in each little local pie, so he devised recipes, selected ingredients, mixed, rolled, and cut out the dough, fluted the edges, and shoved into the oven all the national pies, at the same time keeping an eye on much other Continental pastry.

In short order, he renovated the educational system, established a school of medicine, normal, polytechnic, and agricultural institutions, and one for special training in foreign languages; drew up his scheme for the great University of France, with its branches in different cities; and regulated and coördinated two hundred and fifty col-

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leges and twenty-three thousand elementary schools in the different *arrondissements*.

And he partitioned the *arrondissements* themselves, established their taxes, also the tariffs, customs, and clearance schedules at the ports to foster commerce. Meantime he brought peace after a bloody seven years' civil war, quelling the revolts in Vendée and Brittany; then turned to reorganize religion all over again in the face of a half-infidel society. In this, too, he showed no small adroitness, driving a pretty good bargain with the pope.

Said he to the pope: "The French government does not hold that the Catholic religion is that of the state; but the first consul and his associates proclaim it as their religion. And it is to be freely practised, along with Hebraism and Protestantism. Each citizen is welcome to worship his God as he chooses."

Thus he cleverly gave the appearance of official sanction, without fastening clerical steering-robes to the helm of state. And with this recognition his Holiness had perforce to be content, particularly since he was given the sop of very modest annual stipends for his clergy. In return, all claim was waived to the vast estates confiscated from the church in the Revolution. Had these holdings not been legalized, half the peasants' new titles to their little farms would not have been secure; and France would have been unsettled for generations. It was not the least shrewd of his bargains; and he had done much for liberty of conscience.

These things accomplished, between his studies of the Code, his making of treaties and reviewing of armies, on off days he started the Oise and Scheldt canals to enrich his new province of Belgium; deepened and widened great

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harbors to hold his flotillas and the less menacing fleets of commerce; and built huge reservoirs and great roads over the Alpine passes and from the coast into the heart of Germany.

Paris, his adopted city, was not neglected. Down came the old rookeries that had disturbed the *sous-lieutenant's* sense of order. Down, too, tumbled the convents which had echoed to the tumult of conspirators. In their place came noble arcades and thoroughfares named after his battles; while monuments rose in the squares, churches were restored, and new galleries built to connect the Tuileries and Louvre to house his captured masterpieces.

And if his brain did not conceive each of these mighty works down to the last detail, his were the conceptions; his, too, the energizing of the architects, engineers, and experts he had mobilized. And a portion of his time even went to superintendence. Mornings, the curious might see him ordering away with a short swift gesture the caps of liberty in all the palaces and their replacement with the golden bees, watching the bronze of his cannon go up on the Vendôme column, or pointing out the proper spot for a new bridge to span the Seine. Strangers would come upon him emerging from a conduit, though he was more sensitive than most to smells; again on the quick-step about Paris, a crowd of generals and gamins at his heels; or studying a roll of plans, his green grenadier's coat covered with pulverized mortar, his eyes bright with dreams. So, no penniless subaltern now, down at heel, and envying those who could ride, but maker and breaker of kings, he strode all over Paris, making beautiful her ways.

He was the gardener, causing all France to bloom, but

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a very practical gardener, for in passing he gagged the press, made the legislative bodies his tools, and stiffened with girders, wrought of dictatorial steel but cooled in the cold waters of practicality, many a republican institution. For one cannot with success mix either policies or systems. Too much of the gas of a perverted liberalism creeping in the foundry may spoil many a girder. And if one is fitted by nature to be such an excellent energizer and superintendent, it is only human to aim toward a vast centralization. It is sufficient, at least for admiration, that he carried out the system so unfalteringly, with a force and efficiency nothing short of superb.

Meantime England found that the fine eyes in that noble head could do something besides glow over platoons and architectural plans. They could blaze with wrath at a proud British ambassador. The first consul had made overtures for peace and the consequent recognition of the new régime; and the third silly George, ignoring the upstart, had haughtily consented, *provided* the French would "restore their legitimate princes"!

"Fine!" Napoleon, in effect, retorted. "Now apply the principle at home and welcome the Stuarts back!" Then he turned on the startled ambassador. "I see you want war. Very well, you can have it. Only it will be no mere rattling of the scabbard. The saber will be out!"

First man in the first land of Europe, overlord of Italy and Switzerland, Belgium and Holland, with Spain, Portugal, Germany, following his cue—truly the sun was riding high in its splendor! And to ratify this splendor, as if there were any need for it, by a vote of three and a half million to seventy-five hundred, they made him consul for life.

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But even as the sun, if it be at its zenith, shortly must head for the west, so his mother, alone of all those about him, thought even then that she saw sign of the sun's going down—blood red.

Letizia had much time to think on these things as she sat in Joseph's home in the rue Rocher, gazing down on the human tides of Paris, and longing for those of her beloved gulf, with the sparkle, in the distance, of old Monte Rotondo. Still, she never spoke of her fears, except once to Fesch, when he brought word of some fresh disagreement between Napoleon and his sisters and brothers.

“Napoleon is so heady and strong,” she began, only to stop and exclaim impatiently as her hands felt in her lap for the sewing which, these days, was never there: “*Per Dio!* why does not Julie discharge some of those pestering servants?”

“I should say it was pretty comfortable having them,” returned the abbé, who had no pleasant memories of the days in Marseilles.

“Perhaps; but they will never let me do anything for any one. Still, for whom could I do? Even Jerome is grown up; and as for Napoleon, he wants to do everything for everybody; wife them and shrive them, even bury them.

“And that is the trouble; it is what makes him really lonely. Others seem such shadows beside him, even his brothers and sisters. Lucien and Joseph are clever enough; but they appear at a disadvantage, Napoleon thinks and acts so quickly; and sometimes, I am sure, he considers them fools. Naturally they resent it—I do my-

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self—and they grow moody and sullen. Then he in turn suspects their loyalty. It is so with all who surround him. He is generous to a fault, ever ready to forgive; and he loads all with honors and gifts; but he does not give enough of *himself*. So they prefer more ordinary companionship, with more give and take."

"Surely, Letizia," the abbé remonstrated, "you forget the soldiers."

"The soldiers worship him, Joseph. I refer to his more intimate relationships. Whatever may appear on the surface, the situation in each is strained, with suspicion on both sides. Can you not see? It is the very superiority of his endowment that may bring about his ruin."

She paused to catch at a thread that was forever running through her thoughts.

"If only that woman had not repulsed him! Oh, I know you all think it is only her extravagance and lightness that make me hate her. They are bad enough; but what I really cannot forgive her for is repulsing him. He opened his heart to her; she locked up hers. Had she loved him, he might have been a different man. The result has been to drive him more within himself, harden him in that self-reliance which in the end will prove his ruin."

"'Ruin! Ruin!'" exclaimed the exasperated abbé, who only wanted to be comfortable. "Come, come, Letizia, you exaggerate grossly. Why, things are going along magnificently!"

"They will," exclaimed the mother with something of her son's dry succinctness, "as long as he is the conqueror. But defeated"—she paused, trying to peer into the future, and could not read it. Still, Fesch thought he caught in the twilight by the window, to which even as they talked

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Napoleon's name was borne from passing lips, the three words she murmured: "Defeat, then betrayal!"

Letizia did not stay in the rue Rocher much longer. Joseph, on the rising tide, had taken over the old Marboeuf palace; and the weary woman, who had no mind for palaces, went with her brother into more modest quarters, on the rue Mont Blanc, furnishing some of the rooms out of her own purse.

The news that reached her in this retreat was still alarming. Joseph and Lucien, backed by their coteries of sycophants, were quarreling over the succession to the consulship for life. And Lucien was paying no attention at all to business; had had a rubber stamp made and was letting his subordinates attach his signature as minister of the interior to important documents. Naturally Napoleon was furious.

Even the girls were involved in disputes, jealously demanding titles and preferment for themselves and husbands, precedence over Josephine at dinners and banquets, also front places in that line forming about a hypothetical throne, whispers of which were now heard everywhere.

It all disgusted Letizia, who asked so little for herself; yet she was inclined to take sides with her flesh and blood when she saw Josephine intriguing for a match between Louis and Hortense. It may have been Napoleon's idea; but Letizia thought that the creole had maneuvered things so cleverly that Napoleon at last fancied it his own. For he had been vastly disappointed in this brother for whom he had sacrificed so much, and who had turned out such a poor excuse for an officer and was degenerating into a morbid neurasthenic, obsessed with the fear of

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death, and even of marriage. Certainly he was not royal material; but Napoleon believed that the issue of such a union, should there be any, would offset the constant threat of Josephine's barrenness. In vain had the lovely lady resorted to quack doctors and panaceas; and a little nephew would secure a dynasty.

Pauline, too, was a continuing source of worry. She cared for little besides pleasure; and her conduct, though perhaps not criminal, was light to the extent of holding very lively Bohemian parties and posing for favored artists in the altogether.

For a cure, Napoleon had sent her to the West Indies, dissolved, like Josephine, in tears; but there her husband had died; and on her return she had immediately become enamoured of Prince Camillo Borghese, Roman of both nose and lineage, and considered quite a catch. And since the pretty Paulette, like a child demanding a toy, must have the man she had set her heart on, Letizia sanctioned very hasty nuptials in an obscure chapel. Possibly, as at Montebello, there was need for haste. But Napoleon had not been taken into consultation; and the rub was that only seven months had elapsed since her first husband's death, while Napoleon in his Code had decreed, with meticulous precision, fifty-eight weeks of mourning. So the laws which he had made so debonairly constantly threatened to trip him. And when he made inquiries, because of the now open scandal of a liaison between his sister and Borghese, actually honestly mated, he became quite properly enraged. The laws might not be made *in toto* for his own extraordinary nature, though, of course, he intended, on the whole, to obey them; but certainly they must not be violated by any of his in-laws or family. More than

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ever, therefore, did he look with favor on the alliance between Louis and Hortense; more than ever did he take the part of Josephine and her children against his relatives, including his own mother.

Matters reached a climax when Duroc brought a freshly printed circular to the first consul. Duroc was only the innocent messenger, for the ferret eye of Fouché had discovered this incriminating evidence and inveigled that honest officer into presenting it to Napoleon, then in his cabinet in the Pavillon de Flore. Rapidly his chief glanced over it, crumpled it in his hand, then carefully unrolled and uncreased it.

“Send for Fouché,” he said; “also summon the minister of the interior.”

Then when the two appeared, eying each other, with ominous calm he asked:

“Where did you discover this, Fouché?”

“It is being circulated, Monsieur le Premier Consul, all over Paris.”

Lucien advanced eagerly; his brother waved him back.

“One moment. And why do you accuse the Citizen Minister of the Interior of the authorship of it?”

“These paragraphs here, advocating two brothers’ claims to a throne.”

“You lie,” said Lucien hotly.

“An easy defense,” retorted the sardonic minister of police, “when you caused it to be written.”

Then followed accusation and hot retort, between the death’s-head, with the simper that was so like a sneer on his bloodless lips, and the fiery young man. Through it all, the first consul sat, saying not a word, and letting

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them have it out. He wanted to see, now that Lucien was in a mess, how much the man he would show himself or how much more the fool.

Josephine meanwhile had been tripping up the stairs, and paused, hearing the angry voices. The words, "King, throne, dynasty," caught her.

"Are they still fighting over that?" she sighed, then without ceremony broke in.

Angrily the first consul rose. Never from any one would he brook interruption at councils of state. But, fear in her heart, she flew to him, clung to his neck, and begged, pleaded, and sobbed out to him:

"Oh, give up this idea of royalty. I beg of you. It will mean our ruin!"

The convulsive working of his facial muscles that now betrayed his wrath came and vanished as rapidly as the little wrinkles which a passing breeze sometimes breathes into a pool.

"Cease!" he said. "You, too, are a fool. You do not know what you are saying; and in the presence of others!"

"Oh, do not," she cried, "let them persuade you to this step!"

And tears made ravages in the rouge; the sobs became sniffles. It was almost grotesque.

"There is no step," he retorted angrily. "We are just discussing a foolish little pamphlet. There, there, dry them. *Que diable!* You still here, Fouché? Get out!"

The latter heeded, casting a glance at the lady so *distrait*, from under those lowered shutters, as he passed out.

"Now, Lucien, do you see what a precious fool you have made of yourself? Why, even to concoct a title like this, '*Parallèle entre César, Cromwell, et Bonaparte*,' was

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bêtise. Who revealed to you that there would be a throne? I have not designed it. Your idiocy has just lost you your portfolio, citizen secretary!"

Lucien achieved a magniloquent bow, choking back his anger. He might have lost his position, but he would save his face and his soul's superiority!

"You take it back," he managed, "with no more pleasure than I resign it. I never thought to see a Bonaparte a tyrant!"

Thrusting Josephine aside, Napoleon strode toward him. If looks could have killed, brother Lucien would have made no more fine speeches, published no more verses and pamphlets.

Ever swift in her intuitions, Josephine now saw a chance not only to stop these dynastic plans but to disarm an enemy by defending him. So she flew between the two, once more clung to her husband's neck, running her fingers through his hair and calling him endearing names in broken accents. Nor was it all acting. She would have liked nothing better than to be at peace with this turbulent family.

But now there was another interruption. Possibly the palace was full of eavesdroppers, for word of the fray had gone—no one knew how—to the rue Mont Blanc and Letizia. She had heard of other quarrels and one particularly when Napoleon, who had received Joseph and Lucien in his bath, had suddenly risen in the tub, only to fall back and douse the two fraternal petitioners. But this, she knew, was no horse-play, or child's play either. So immediately she had put on her bonnet and made for the palace. Without knocking, she entered the cabinet, to face Josephine, no quarter now in her imperious eyes.

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“It is you who have done it,” Letizia cried. “You have intrigued against Lucien with your despicable friend Fouché!” And there was a significant accent on the word “friend.”

“That is unjust,” whimpered Josephine softly; and Napoleon tried to interfere.

“Mother, mother, have you, too, lost your senses?” he cried, almost beside himself between the two.

“Nay, hear me out!” the old lady went intrepidly on. “I will have my say. Who was it took gambling concessions from Fouché? Your wife! Who took a thousand gold louis for giving information?”

Napoleon’s hand shook.

“Is this true?” he asked Josephine, almost in a whisper.

For answer she only sobbed: “It is not as she makes it appear. It was only a loan.” And he turned from her with a gesture of disgust.

“Bah! there is no use in cross-examining you. You would only lie about it. Mother, *you* do not lie; but you have let your rage get the better of you. You—”

“My rage!” I have cause for rage. It is she who plotted with Fouché these lies about my boy.”

“Lucien, Lucien! Always Lucien!” he exclaimed both with exasperation and sadness. “Do you care only for him? Have you no thought for me?”

“I love best,” she said, “the one who is unfortunate.”

“Unfortunate!” He threw up his hands.

But Letizia to-day *would* have the last word.

“The trouble with you, Napoleon, is that for all your mightiness you are still the child. You would bend us all to your will, but when it suits your whim to do a generous deed, you expect us all to be overpowered. Mindful

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of your recent high-handedness, we do not sufficiently ex-claim, and you are like the little boy who has been very naughty but who expects to absolve his naughtiness by giving up his pet toy. You sulk and are hurt because you are not sufficiently appreciated. No, no, my son. You may issue your bulletins, but you cannot answer that one!"

And loftily she swept out of the palace, leaving her distinguished son astonished at the outbreak. And Letizia herself, now under the arch which her son had built to commemorate his triumphs, began to wonder if she had not been over-harsh and belittled too much his very real generosity.

CHAPTER XX

Twelve Rifles at Vincennes

MORE than ever now did Letizia rue the day when the *sous-lieutenant* threw in his fortunes with France. The Revolution might have been settled, but there were endless revolutions in her family. Good fortune had been their ill fortune, for success had spoiled them, plunging the girls at an impressionable age in the corrupt society of Marseilles when they should have been at home in the more wholesome, if somewhat provincial, life of Corsica. And it had changed the boys. They might have been contented, useful citizens, had not their brother's climb placed them on heights that turned their heads. They even seemed now to be pulling at his coat-tails so that they might occupy the first rung, thinking it was their own merit and not his genius that had brought them where they were. And as she left the palace after the last stormy interview with Napoleon and Josephine and passed under the horse-chestnuts and by the shining statues and arches and monuments her son had erected, she feared that the breach between Napoleon and Lucien might be final.

Nevertheless Napoleon weakened, as so often he did where his family was concerned, not so far as to jeopardize his policies but to give them honors and spending-

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money enough to live like princes. When his wrath had cooled he summoned Lucien. "You must give up your portfolio," he said; "I cannot publicly sanction your pernicious pamphlets and your reference to me as Cæsar, by retaining you. But I cannot forget that you are my brother. No longer are you minister of the interior; you are ambassador to Spain."

So he whom Letizia had called "unfortunate" went to Madrid, to bungle treaties, and receive many handsome presents from prime ministers and kings. Still, Napoleon, mindful perhaps of Brumaire, overlooked his blunders, patched the treaties up, and called his brother home, giving him a handsome income and a palace in which he could write more romances and hang up the masterpieces given him in Spain.

Joseph did a little better—for the time. Off he too went, to negotiate with England the treaty of Amiens, and, coached by his brother, came back with excellent results. And Napoleon acknowledged his services by thrusting him in front of the first consul's person to receive the plaudits of the crowds. It was not an unaffectionate gesture, though it may have served an ulterior purpose. Nor was it entirely undeserved by Joseph, whose chief fault lay in having such a superior younger brother. But Joseph found favor only for a little while, for Lucien again got into hot water, and Joseph formed with him a new *entente*, thinking thus to strengthen their chances for succession.

Lucien's trouble this time was born of woman. For Christine, who had learned so quickly of life, had now learned something more from Death. Lucien was inconsolable. He haunted her grave and buttonholed every one

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to recite her virtues. In fact, his grief was so poignant that in six months he set up a grass-widow in a little hotel connected with his own by a tunnel, through which he paraded in his nightcap for surcease from his sorrow. A son was duly, or unduly, born; and in a rush of conscience, or because he thought this heir might do for a dynasty in place of a merely supposititious nephew, he gave the lady full benefit of clergy.

Again Napoleon was kept in the dark; and Joseph took it in his head to acquaint him—at the wrong time—for Napoleon, at dinner at Malmaison, had just been taking Josephine to task because of brother Jerome. For brother Jerome, too, had gone and got himself married to a nobody, a Mistress Betsy Patterson of Baltimore, in the new American republic.

“The young cockerel,” the first consul had just been saying to Josephine, “does nothing, knows nothing! You women spoiled him. While I was away, he spent every hour of the twenty-four gaming, conducting liaisons, or going about Paris, buying everything he saw and sending the bills to the Tuileries. Yet you did not correct his conduct, merely petted him and laughed at his follies. Why, when I came back and put him in the navy, this powder-monkey, who scarce can shave, read me a lecture on my naval policy. And now he marries overnight some foreigner no one ever heard of, when I had other designs for him.”

So he retired to his apartment upstairs, where Joseph was ushered in to explode the new bombshell. The first consul also exploded.

“What! Acknowledge a bastard!” he cried. “I will see you all back in Ajaccio first—and to starve. You flout me

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—all of you. My sisters and brothers form cabals against me. No, no”—this to Joseph’s attempted protests—“I am not such an idiot! Let him give up this woman with whom he has lived illegally.”

With the utmost delicacy Joseph suggested that the first consul, too, had had affairs.

“Precious few!” retorted Napoleon. “Not one tenth of those you and Paris have credited me with. Though my wife is not young, I have neither the time nor the inclination. And the one or two I have had have been affairs of the moment. Nor have they been conducted in public to affront public opinion and hurt my wife.”

“But Lucien,” interposed Joseph, “was discreet. And now he has married her.”

“Discreet! It has been an open scandal! And the woman is at any man’s call. You are stupid to urge this. Do you not perceive that such alliances weaken my position and that of my whole family, and that proper ones strengthen it? No, tell Lucien I do not care whom he lives with, provided it be decently. It is his business. But I will not acknowledge the woman or her offspring before the world.”

There were more diplomatic interchanges between the second and third brothers, the first acting as intermediary. So Joseph, on the next occasion, reported Lucien’s fine sentiments: “My son, wife, and I will stand together. Nothing will part us!”

“*Quelle sottise!*” once more exploded Napoleon. “He would play the noble hero in righteous indignation? I might accept such excuses from St. Anthony or St. Francis, but not from Lucien or Jerome!”

He made one characteristic turn of the apartment, then paused before Joseph.

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“You are all against me. I have given you everything, yet you cry for more. Well, your eternal wrangling has done one good thing: it has crystallized my determination. Frenchmen want no republic. Like all my brawling relatives, they need a strong hand, an emperor and an established dynasty. So long as I am merely an elected ruler, all Europe will continue to shoot at me from ambush, try to stab me, blow me up, as they did on the rue Nicaise. Each day a fresh proof of plots by their hired assassins is brought to me.

“And,” he added with sarcasm, not unmixed with hurt, “my brothers want thrones, my sisters diadems, to play with. *Eh bien*, you shall have them!”

The last straw came when Joseph and Lucien undertook to upset Louis, who was supposedly safe in the Beauharnais faction since his marriage with Hortense and the birth of his son. Louis from his study of mortality and the pharmacopœia seemed to have passed on some of the very diseases guarded against in that horrendous tome, for the little Charles Napoleon, born in 1802 and now two years old, was a squawling and croupy infant. Nevertheless Napoleon had announced his intention of naming the child as his successor to the consulship, which in a month or so would mean the throne. The moping Louis had been indifferent to the honor; but when Joseph and Lucien placed a different construction upon it, he showed unusual spirit.

“Will you stand meek under such an affront?” said the two brothers. “Napoleon has made you inferior to your son.” And locking his arms in theirs, before he had time to reflect, they haled him off to the palace, into which he stormed.

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“What have I done,” he cried, “to merit this? To think that an infant is placed above me!”

“He couldn’t wail more,” said Napoleon, then stared incredulous, as Louis, pacing the floor, lashed out with, “You shall not have him! I shall take him away! You shall not separate a father from his son!” and other reproaches all crazy enough, until Napoleon, for once in his life, retreated, crying, “Good God! what do they want now?” as he banged the door.

But exasperated as he was with all three brothers, again he relented, restoring them to their old places in the proposed succession. Still Lucien was not satisfied. His love-child must have a place. Adamant now, the first consul refused. Lucien wrote a note to the palace, then began to pack. Napoleon did not show anger as he scanned the note. “I retire into Italy with nothing but hatred for you in my heart,” it read.

Long he sat there, staring into the dusk.

There were other problems to set him staring and to hurry that march down the nave of Notre Dame. Murat and a squadron of his dragoons had dashed over the border, right into the nest of Bourbon princes at Strasbourg, had seized one and haled him to the walls of Paris, then to the dark dungeons of Vincennes. Rumors were on every tongue, and over the town hung that ominous atmosphere that preceded the Reign of Terror. Was the first consul to emulate the regicides by shedding royal blood?

If such was his intention, his face betrayed no uneasiness, the Sunday after the capture, as he listened to the Latin sonorities of the mass, smelled the sweet fragrance of the censers, and watched the pale fingers of the priest

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call down a benison from high heaven. A benison on what? On an atrocious deed? Josephine wondered and was thoroughly frightened, Napoleon's face was so immobile and mask-like. And never had he silenced her so harshly as when she had questioned him at dawn that morning.

The devious Savary, head of the private police, had just left for Vincennes with Caulaincourt. A hasty court martial would be held. Indeed, so she had heard, the victim's grave had already been dug. Fouché had proved, at least to her husband's satisfaction, that the assassins who had so often attempted her husband's life had been in the pay of England and these Bourbon princes. It was undoubtedly true. No wonder he had determined to make an example of some one. But this *Duc d'Enghien* they had kidnapped was youthful, ingenuous, well liked. Fouché had probably forged the documents in this case—he was perfectly capable of it—so as to call down the wrath of Europe on his chief and strengthen the coalition against him. So far Josephine's intuitions led her, and very shrewdly; and so she foresaw dark disaster, an eternal infamy attached to that name she had taken at the civil magistrate's eight years before.

They were to dine at Malmaison. As they drove out, through the country-side, every leaf and twig of which sparkled from the recent rains, Napoleon said not a word. In the late afternoon, however, he seemed to recover something of his spirits and played with the little Charles Napoleon on a marble bench behind a wind-break of cypress. In his lighter moments he was fond of practical jokes; had once pushed the stately Josephine into the breakers at the shore before all her *dames du palais*, and laughed when she emerged, soaked to the skin. But now he

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played too boisterously; dangled the child on his boot, threw him up too high, and made faces so grotesque that he frightened this nephew step-grandson of his. Then he was nonplussed, for he liked children.

Joseph's cabriolet now swung up the long drive from the entrance to the terrace of the château; and Josephine, recognizing him, went to meet him. For once there was accord, almost a *rapprochement*, between the factions.

"Is it true?" she asked.

"I am afraid so. They have prepared his grave. With it, Napoleon has dug that of his reputation."

"See what you can do then. I cannot sway him. You know what he is when his mind is made up."

It seemed as if all that day vehicles were to ride up out of Paris to disturb the calm of a peaceful Sunday and to prevent a conqueror from making scarlet history. Finally, in disgust, Napoleon shut himself in upstairs. Letizia, however, had already started from Paris. She, like Lucien, had already packed up; but she determined once more to plead with her son. This blood he would shed must not be on his hands.

Age had at last taken a little toll of Letizia. The iron-gray had come into the chestnut as the iron entered her soul. And though she was only fifty-four and promised to live to a hale old age, if worry over her turbulent family did not kill her, her figure had harshened a little, and she sat bolt upright against the carriage seat, no longer the Roman matron with the rose complexion and handsome eyes, but an austere, eagle-eyed woman, beginning to show the old lady. But never would she lose the impression she gave of noble bearing and true grandeur of soul.

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Just this side of Malmaison, she saw a rider black against the sunset gold and slightly rising and falling in the almost rhythmic measures of a gallop. He reined in as he reached them, at a fork of the highway, and, pointing with his riding-whip, called, "Take the other road!" Then, thinking he saw a lady behind the drawn shades, he bowed low and galloped on. In passing she was sure she recognized the strange young man with whom she had conversed at Ajaccio and Montebello; but it was too late to call him back.

The granite of her sterling common sense had always been shot through with mica-specks of eerie superstition; and immediately she overlooked the practical reason, the heavy rains, that might have underlain the warning. She saw in his luminous features those of a supernatural messenger, and in his words, "Take the other road!"—so reminiscent of their old conversations—an admonition which she must convey, as though from heaven, to her son.

When her carriage drove under the porte-cochère, Josephine shrank from greeting her mother-in-law. Still, she had force, this old lady. Perhaps she might influence her son. So, "You are welcome," she said.

"Thanks, Madame la Première Consule. Have you heard of this thing?"

"I have," returned her daughter-in-law sadly. "But no argument seems of any weight. Still, if you wish to see him, you will find him upstairs."

Not for worlds would Josephine now have knocked at that closed door. Letizia, however, did not falter; and when to his, "Who is there?" she had answered, "Your mother," she took his silence for assent, and entered the room, finding him deep in his chair between shelves lined

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with books from ceiling to floor, a bust of Cæsar on his desk, and ink-spots on the floor where he had flicked his pen. There were no lights in the room; he sat in the twilight, and his eyes, she thought, were more brooding than ever she had seen them before. At once she recalled that evening at Montebello, when she had thought from his expression that he was doing violence to something deep within. And all he said now was, rather harshly:

“You are welcome, signora, provided, like all women, you do not come to interfere.”

“Seven years ago, my son,” she said, taking the seat which in his moody detachment he did not offer, “I interfered, as I said, for the last time. To-night I break that promise. I am your mother and cannot stand silent while you do this thing. It means that you invite your downfall, that you will bear the curse of the whole world into your grave!”

Involuntarily he twitched at this as if she had hit on a hidden nerve of fear. Then, controlling himself, he turned.

“Seven years ago, too, I tried to explain things to you, though matters of state are not in a woman’s province. I shall try once more. Attend!

“You remember the attempt on my life in the rue Nicaise? Very well. Did you know that there have been many attempts since? All right. These I thwarted; but I cannot thwart them forever. The Comte d’Artois, for one, has sixty assassins in Paris. Would you see your son murdered?”

It was difficult, the way he put it, and only a very thin surface of austerity hid the mother’s tenderness. Nevertheless she answered intrepidly:

“I would die for you, my son; but I would rather see

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you assassinated than an assassin yourself." For the moment she seemed crushed, then went on brokenly, "Surely there is some other way."

"There is no other way. I wish there were." He paused, thinking of another wakeful night by the sands of an Eastern sea. "I shall be damned for this as I was at Joppa, and I shall be ruined if I weaken. But listen again: The king of England has his spies in France. On the west coast the Duc de Berri has landed. Between them they have hatched a neat plot. I am to be kidnapped, they say—polite word for murder. But I have matched their craft with craft. My agent La Touche palmed himself off as my foe and joined the conspirators. He has secured papers; they lie before me. And some of the generals, Moreau, Pichegru, are in the plot. Here I am, a ring of spies and traitors in Paris ready to spring the trap, Berri already landed, and the Duc d'Enghien on the Rhine border ready to cross. So I forestall them and seize the duke. No longer will they think to lay a hand on me. I shall strike terror into their hearts by his death. So perish, they will see, all the enemies of Napoleon!"

For a few swift seconds Letizia gazed on him. He was so little like the man she remembered, so indifferent to his security and actually chafing at the guards his friends recommended as a reasonable precaution. And his generals who thought they knew him well would have been amazed to see him sunk in this melancholy that sometimes overwhelms men of the greatest creative genius. Twice before it had gravely attacked him: in his adolescence when he had pondered on suicide; again in Italy, when in a rage at his generals he had told them to take over the command and do better. Even Achilles could sulk in his

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tent. But this was the third and the most serious attack. And there was a fierce intensity in the diatribe uttered there in the twilight, which, Letizia was sure, did not come from any threat to his person.

At last she spoke with such measured words that each seemed uttered out of a deep agony.

“But this duke is a youth, nothing but a boy. You are flesh of my flesh, Napoleon; and to say it strikes me to the heart; but I am afraid your verdict comes somehow from your wish to be king.”

“Who has suggested that, madame?”

“All Paris says it; and I can read you, my son.”

“And if I am not crowned, what other course is there? They call us upstarts, *nouveaux riches*. You yourself should resent that, madame, as a Ramolino if not a Bonaparte. As long as I am consul only, they will conspire at my life. If I become emperor, with a dynasty established, they will recognize us at last, and leave plotting to restore the Bourbons. It means security for France. If I fall, she will be helpless.”

“Oh, my son, do you not count too much on yourself? God can raise up others.”

“He has not appeared to,” he dryly and a little scornfully returned.

“But can you not see? If you are content to reign as first consul, a republican ruler, a just and enlightened one, your name will go down to be blessed for all generations. Already you have glory and achievements enough. It may be cursed—”

“It is good of you to prophesy, signora,” he retorted sarcastically.

“I do not prophesy,” she began; but even as she spoke,

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the bust of Cæsar, dislodged by some sudden movement of his, dropped to the floor to be shattered in pieces. It was the slightest of accidents, of course, but it did not lighten the mood of either of the Corsicans. They stared at the shards ; then rapidly she went on :

“Oh, you must not tempt fate by accepting the crown or killing this boy. Once more I plead with you, my son. If it would sway you, I would go down on my knees to you, and I am a proud woman.”

“Enough, signora,” but his voice was gentler. “I know you mean well ; but my decision is irrevocable.”

She rose and for just a few heartbeats stood there in the gathering gloom, as tall and unyielding as her son, her dark gown so lost in the shadows that he could see nothing of her but her white face and pleading eyes.

“Farewell,” she said at last. “I go to Italy to-morrow.”

“With Lucien?”

She nodded assent.

So bitter was he now at what he inwardly termed her defection that he turned away.

She took one or two steps toward him, paused, then also turned and glided so softly out of the door that he did not know that she had gone.

At six next day, the bells of the neighboring church broke on the morning air. He had been quite cynical at times about religion, professing it to be good for society, since it contented the poor, through immortal hope, with the present good fortunes of the rich. Again he had defended even orthodoxy quite warmly. The recent cynicisms may have been due to a love of argument or proof of a growing materialism ; but they were, in a way, only

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lip-service to skepticism. Never did he hear those bells without being stirred by childhood recollections—the mysteries of the altar, the sacrament, and the admonitions of his mother and the just old man, the archdeacon. He was stirred by more than mere esthetic sensations or the pathos of a youth one cannot recapture. And he was moved now profoundly as he rose from the chair, hearing, in ghastly counterpoint to the golden notes of those bells, sharp reports—over a newly made grave, a few leagues away. . . .

A few minutes earlier, a bewildered princeling had been taken from a dungeon, bidding his captors a courteous “Good morning!” and inquiring blithely where they were taking him. They led him down the staircase, followed by his pet dog, and through a postern into the dried-up moat, just as the sun rose. The sunshine was glorious, every twig and leaf on the plain seeming to reflect the light. Then he saw a heap of hastily piled up earth—a hollow beside it. He had his answer; he knew now where they were sending him. Still he asked that his eyes be left unbound, and stood against the dripping walls, twelve long barrels pointing at his heart.

“Aim straight, messieurs!” he said gallantly.

They obeyed, though it is hard to aim straight when one can see a brave young face smiling so gallantly in the dawn.

The body tumbled. There was a sound of mattocks striking gravel. The earth fell, was heaped up. A little dog crawled over the heap and whimpered. . . .

And the shots and the sweet angelus on the morning air had been almost simultaneous.

CHAPTER XXI

Letizia Does Not See Her Son Crowned

NEITHER Letizia nor Lucien was present at the ceremonies when they crowned her son emperor. The new court painter David painted her in; but that was an artistic little white lie designed to please a ruler who might like to have whitewashed any breach in the family.

This magniloquent event did not take place until December second, although he had been proclaimed in May. Meantime, Cadoudal, the leader of the great conspiracy, had been executed; Pichegrus had strangled himself; and General Moreau had been sentenced to but two years' imprisonment, later to be nobly pardoned by Napoleon, though this old rival had aimed at his life.

In preparing for the new order, there had been considerable trouble about titles. As marshals of the new empire, Murat, Masséna, Lannes, Berthier, Ney, Bernadotte, Augereau, Lefebvre, Mortier, Jourdan, were content; so also the two associate consuls, Cambacérès and Lebrun, as archchancellor and archtreasurer respectively. "Prince Joseph, Grand Elector," sounded well, and "Prince Louis, Grand Constable of the Empire." Even Eugène was a prince and old Bacciochi a senator.

But there was quite a to-do on the part of Eliza,

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Pauline, and Caroline when, at a dinner at Malmaison, Duroc announced each of the relatives by the new labels. Now, Pauline had reveled in being called the Princess Borghese when Josephine was still only Madame la Première Consule. But to-night Josephine was her Majesty, Hortense not only a princess but her Imperial Highness—a distinction with a difference—while Caroline was only Madame la Maréchale and Eliza plain Madame la Sénatrice. All through the dinner they sat, almost silent, and eying, like Cinderella's stepsisters, their sister-in-law. All through dinner, too, Napoleon twitted them, preceding every sentence addressed to the Beauharnais faction by the new titles, and looking at the three sisters slyly to see the effect.

It was too much. With the sweets, Caroline fainted. And the imperial brother, as he bent over her, whispered, "As usual, you women have won!" and aloud to the guests, "Do not fear. Her Imperial Highness will come to." Then, as Caroline opened her eyes at the magic words, he called, with finger raised in mock admonition: "Announce them all over again, Duroc. And remember now, it is '*Their Imperial Highnesses.*' One slip and off with your head!"

Weather did not favor the coronation festivities. It was a cold and frosty morning when Constant pulled aside the draperies to awaken the one-time *sous-lieutenant*. So chill it was in fact that Constant advised an extra pair of cassimere, as he began slowly to array his impatient employer—first, with the exquisite cambric shirt, which he patted lovingly, silk stockings embroidered in gold, and diamond buckles to clasp these; and, in prompt order, the white silk breeches and braces studded with gems. Then he got down on his knees to lace the velvet boots,

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Napoleon keeping up a running fire of comment the while: "What! gems even on the braces! The devil! Odilette and Marguerite will send us a pretty bill!" Nevertheless he was not altogether displeased.

And now came the white velvet vest with diamonds in the buttons, and an undercoat of crimson velvet faced with white and caught with double clasps of diamonds. Finally, for this man who once had polished his own boots in Auxonne, the coronation robe, crimson, too, and lined with white velvet, and studded all over with gold bees and with a golden cord and tassels! The little valet staggered under it, for it weighed eighty pounds.

Thus bravely arrayed in more than a million francs' worth of clothes, not counting the crowns, which were over in the cathedral, he joined Josephine at the great entrance where the rabble had slain the Swiss Guard, and entered a coach drawn, like Cinderella's, by eight cream-colored horses. He, however, had no thought of the glory vanishing when his clock struck twelve.

And it looked like a pumpkin, this wondrous vehicle, with its great gilt body surmounted by four gold eagles supporting a gold crown at the top. Waist-high, the panels were painted in pink and blue; the rest all around was glass; so that the royal pair might be viewed as is the casket in an undertaker's wagon.

The old pope, who had been inveigled into crowning him, he had sent on ahead, in a gilt coach preceded by a man on a mule bearing the historic cross. Then from the Carrousel, by the rue St.-Honoré, where at Vendémiaire he had ordered his guns to speak, he rode on, led by Murat's beet-red plumes and clattering dragoons, clad in green and with glittering casques, through lines of red

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and blue foot stationed at the sides to keep the populace back. Windows along the way rented at three hundred francs ; and from cornice and ledge and pinnacle streamed gaudy-colored paper flowers and festoons. They had culled out a holiday, but one not nearly so exciting as those they remembered. The tumbril had given way to a pumpkin coach.

The head of the long colorful serpent at last reached the Bishop's Palace by the Seine, to the left of the cathedral with its dark towers, calm saints, and leering gargoyles ; then the imperial party passed in.

The musicians within the cathedral, three hundred in number and the choicest from opera and stage, now struck up ; the organ rolled ; and to royal marches newly composed for the occasion, and loud Te Deums, the conqueror took his place on a dais approached by twenty-two steps, under a crimson canopy and by a great throne, facing the throng of jeweled head-dresses, Renaissance lace collars rising sheerly from lovely necks, and gilt epaulets, all filling the farthest recess of aisle and nave and vault with myriad sparkles like those of stalactites in subterranean caverns.

On one side of him stood the archtreasurer and arch-chancellor ; on the right, Joseph and Louis, princes both, and grand elector and grand constable respectively. Josephine stood below, surrounded by her ladies in waiting, a few paces from the foot of the steps.

The mass was now performed ; the orotund Latin rolled out ; the organ boomed ; and censers smote the nose as startlingly as the massed colors the eye. Then the eighty pounds' weight of crimson and gold bees was placed on the conqueror's shoulders ; laurel crown, sword and scep-

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ter, sparkling with brilliants, were blessed; and a frail old man, like a wax effigy emanating benignancy and good-will, put out his pale hands for the crown. But brusquely, for such a ceremony, Napoleon seized it, brushing his Holiness aside, and placed the gold laurel on his brow. And at once a murmur ran through the crowd—one might have sworn it was from the ghost-like lips of the storied and sainted who once had trod these aisles and whose likenesses stood all about, sculptured in stone—a protest at this throwing down of the gage to the established traditions of the ages, this gesture signifying that at last the church was inferior to the state and to that little man there. But at once his eyes swept the throng. Here were the lordliest and most powerful in the land, but *his* creatures. “Defy me,” the glance said, “who dare!” And one understood at once why they were below those steps and he above.

But now it was Josephine’s turn. The *dames du palais* and ladies in waiting had carefully robed her in silver brocade, studded, too, with gold bees a little smaller than Napoleon’s masculine counterparts; and wrists, shoulder, and brow were scintillant with the gems of bracelets, clasps, and bandeau.

Softly lustrous were the dark-blue eyes; and in bearing Marie Antoinette had not been more queenly. And there was this advantage: she showed no *hauteur*, only soft glances for every one there. The majority were glad to see her happy, all but Savary and cynical Talleyrand, and Fouché, ever the death’s-head at any banquet—and the in-laws.

And she herself was very happy. The shoals of divorce seemed to be safely past. Had not her lord and master

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said to her brothers when they urged the parting—oh, she had heard it; one can hear everything in a palace—“Why, now that I am powerful, should I put her away? My wife is now a good wife who does no harm. She will merely play at being empress, have diamonds, fine dresses, the trifles that will please her age. To give her these is but bare justice. I will not make her unhappy. She shall be crowned if it costs me a hundred thousand men!” Perhaps, like the Hindu holy man, he thought thus to acquire merit; perhaps he protested too much. At any rate the lady was reassured.

She too had a coronation robe. It was weighted with carefully seeded pearls; and the train had been intrusted to Hortense and, by a cruel irony, to Eliza, Pauline, and Caroline. It was very heavy, but the fair Hortense, a pretty picture with her violet eyes and flaxen aureole of hair, held up her corner nobly. Not so the three sisters. When the signal was given for Josephine’s advance to the dais, with an ill concealed sullenness they held fast, budging not an inch; and their weight on the robe almost tore the diamond clasps from her shoulder and ludicrously threw her out of step. Napoleon from the throne saw the trick, glanced at his sisters—once. Thereafter the procession moved forward like a well oiled machine.

Before him Josephine knelt, and with some affection he placed the diadem, with its large emeralds, amethysts, and gold ball on top, on the chestnut coils. He appeared genuinely glad to please her so and not a little proud of the impression she made.

It had been the only softly human note in the proceedings. Sometimes he himself appeared bored, stifling a yawn; and when the pope had poured the sacred oil on

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his head and it ran down his cheek, he brushed it away in irritation. To him, as to the cooler there, the august pageant, with all its superb setting, had a touch of farce ; but it was a fearsome farce ! The masques and mummeries were symbols of a power never before gained by mortal man, and all manipulated by a little man who was scarce heavier than that gold and crimson robe over his shoulders, and who but eleven years before had searched through his pockets for a *deux-sous* piece. Perhaps, too, he was eager to hurry through with it because something was missing. His mother and Lucien were not on hand to see him crowned.

Whatever the reason, he did hurry the gorgeous spectacle just a little ; and at last marched out to more hosannas and thundering of organs, and rode back in the pumpkin coach to slip off his robes and don with a sigh of relief the green grenadier's coat. Then, while people danced and the trees of the Tuileries Gardens flashed with innumerable colored lights, and fireworks went up by the bridges of the Seine, he sat down at his desk and planned out a campaign. He was glad to be at work. It had been a splendid fête day ; but it had been just a little cold.

CHAPTER XXII

Napoleon Talks with Bourrienne about Italy, with Josephine about Her Bills

IN the spring after the coronation Bourrienne rode out to Malmaison. He had been dismissed from his secretaryship for sundry irregularities of conduct or disposition; but Josephine, who saw him often, had written that Napoleon was in one of his forgiving moods. So now he had ventured to come, was ushered into the reception salon, and sent up his name.

It was for Josephine that the place had been purchased some seven years before by Napoleon, but he loved it as his own. Not that he could afford to idle even here; but the pyramidal slate roofs, the quiet gray walls, the serene windows gave him an intense gratification whenever he rode up the drive. Sometimes, too, he found time to play with his little nephew step-grandson behind a wind-break of cypress or by a blue pool; again would look up from the windfall of documents on his desk to sniff the fragrance of lilac or gaze on the evergreens' new growth, sage-green and lemon-yellow, which brightened the darker foliage as the gold tassels and aiguillettes his grenadiers' coats.

Bourrienne, however, had no eye for color or scent. Inwardly he sniffed at each imperial gold bee embroi-

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ered on the Empire chairs. At the same time he was calculating what sort of a bargain, in case of defeat, he might drive with the banished Bourbons.

Overhead he could hear the empress singing; even as he saw through the French window two caleches drive up. From one descended the portly jeweler Odiotte, claret-colored jewel packets sticking out of his snuff-colored coat; from the other Mlle. Despeaux, milliner, followed by many red and yellow striped bandboxes.

“*Parbleu!*” he exclaimed. “They have followed her out here. Fortunate that Napoleon has not yet arrived, or he would drive them out as Christ did the money-changers.

“Not that he is like Christ,” he added to himself; but his reflections were disturbed by a third equipage which rolled up at top speed. Foam-flecked horses were jerked till the breeching almost snapped, and a little man with a riding-cloak over his green coat, round hat tilted forward, and powdered all over with dust, burst out of a clump of officers and leaped up the steps just as the tail end of the bandboxes disappeared. Shortly after, Rousttan announced to Bourrienne that the emperor would see him; and the ex-secretary mincingly pursed his lips into the hated “*Sire*” by which he must address his old protégé.

He was surprised, however, to see the emperor, instead of waiting for any obeisance, come forward, place one hand in his, the other, with affection, on his shoulder.

“Ah! did you think that rank could change my feelings toward an old comrade? Foolish fellow! All this show in Paris is for the people, not my friends. And, as you see, except for these silly bees which Josephine has ordered, there is little of pomp in this quiet retreat.”

His manner was as agreeable as ever it had been, that

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Cupid's-bow smile quite as charming. Still, "All for a purpose," thought the skeptical one. "What does he want of me now?"

Napoleon read him and his eyes showed his hurt; then he smiled.

"So you are still the same lovable but touchy Bourrienne, always the man with the grievance. I can see into your head as though you were an egg—with the top sliced off. You should banish the addled mood."

And, as if he himself strove to banish it, he made the kindest of inquiries about Madame de Bourrienne, told him of a mission in store for him to Hamburg, then plunged into an astonishing confidence.

"Often I think of the old days; and soon I shall revisit the old school, Brienne—before I go to Italy. Thither I set out next week. At Milan I shall crown myself king. But I shall tell you a secret: that is only a step."

And now he went on as much for his own benefit as his auditor's:

"I have great designs for Italy, though for these no one will give me credit. You have undoubtedly observed how all her principalities quarrel with each other; how jealous Genoese, Piedmontese, Milanese, Neapolitans, and Venetians are of each other. Very well, I must first unite them under French rule, with the capital at Rome, the pope, of course, being limited to spiritual authority. So gradually these little states will grow accustomed to uniform laws and ideals; their race prejudices will be extinguished; and I shall weld them into a united Italy. And now, my dear friend, I shall tell you another secret: then, when she is thoroughly united, say, in ten, twenty years, I shall give Italy her independence back!"

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Actually he seemed boyishly enthusiastic over the prospects; his eyes glowed; then he went on:

“All this, of course, I should not tell you; but I feel happy in confiding in you. It is like old times. All has been locked in my heart. Now, you see, I open all to you.”

He broke into a chuckle:

“And once we were just two idle *sujets*, walking the streets of Paris, with empty pockets, mine emptier than yours—do you remember?” Too well did Bourrienne remember; but Napoleon reflectively continued: “What was it told me that some day I should be master of France? Destiny? The Fates? It seemed then only a wish—a vague wish—”

The other, thinking the ensuing silence his cue for exit, rose.

“What! going already, Bourrienne? Let us chat a little while. God knows when we shall see each other again!”

Most, under such circumstances, would have felt impelled to go out to do or die for the little man; not so Bourrienne. He did brighten, but only because of the flattering equality these advances seemed to imply. His weakness, however, he showed by rushing into a flattery, which, once outside, he would instantly regret.

“Already,” he said, “you are at the point of which *we* used to talk.”

The “we” was a presumption, but Napoleon ignored it.

“Not yet,” he broke out. “It will take longer than you imagine. There is England; she is everywhere. The other nations are involved, but they are only our instruments; serving sometimes one, sometimes the other—whichever they think has the best chance for success. At bottom the quarrel is between England and me.”

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They had been walking up and down between the ceiling-high bookcases, Bourrienne delighted at the intimacy, complacently keeping at the imperial shoulder. By the fireplace Napoleon stopped.

“Before you start for Hamburg,” he said, “you must do me a service.” He paused, showing now a deeper concern than he had in the outburst over his most implacable foe. “It is about my wife. You visit her often. Ah, do not start! It is quite right that you should. You were too long a member of our family not to continue her friend, as you are mine.

“And since you have her ear, I would ask you to advise with her about her extravagance. I deny her nothing, give her all the pomp and pretty things her heart requires. But, *diabolique!* she must buy everything in sight; spends half her time with leech dressmakers and jewelers. They dissipate her strength, and also charge her four times what each bauble is worth. Then she deceives me about the bills.

“It all distresses me beyond measure and threatens our happiness, for I can give away millions but cannot with equanimity see a hundred squandered. I learned caution through poverty, as you can well remember, my friend.

“Nor is it my nature to reason patiently with a woman. I start to; but she remonstrates and coaxes, and I grow disgusted; then, *quelle sottise!* there are tears—a flood—I am furious and leave the room. Next morning she promises repentance; I forgive her, pay her ridiculous debts; and in three days we have it all over again.”

He stopped short, only to go on winningly:

“It is my way, you see, to bear down, coerce; yet I really cannot bear to be brutal, particularly to a woman.

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So, for my sake, counsel her." Then suddenly he broke out with bitterness: "If only she had borne me a child, not alone for the filial affection every man craves, but because of the danger! If I die without an heir, not one of my brothers is capable of taking my place. All is begun—nothing ended."

Bourrienne, of course, promised to heed the imperial request, then, by way of farewell added:

"So, sire, you go to hear the old bells of Brienne. Doubtless they will please you better than the bells of Rueil."

The remark was ill chosen. It was the bells of Rueil, hard by Malmaison, to which he had listened that dawn when the Duc d'Enghien was shot. Bourrienne was altogether too airy.

Napoleon marked him with his eye, coldly now. He had been amiable with the man as he often was with those he was about to send on missions. It paid; but his remarks had been prompted too by genuine affection, which now he regretted.

"Very true—very true; you are right," he replied, with impatience.

And that night he wrote to Joseph, with whom he was temporarily reconciled, among others, this paragraph:

Bourrienne came to see me. He is the same touchy, topographical individual. It does not pay to open up to any one.

In the meantime Bourrienne had sent his name to the empress; but once ushered into her suite, his only counsel consisted of a hasty warning about more bandboxes. Then off he rode toward Pont Carré to see Fouché.

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Josephine intended to heed the warning, but she must first finish the inspection of the pretty things displayed before her. The delay was dangerous, for the emperor suddenly determined to have a chat with "his little Josephine," for whom he still felt considerable comradely affection; and he strode to her apartment, humming "Malbrouck" in his outrageous falsetto.

A soft susurrus of petticoats succeeded his knock. He rapped again—faint sounds of people on tiptoe—and he would have entered without ceremony—when Mademoiselle d'Avrillon opened the door and he was admitted. Josephine sat, her chestnut tresses being combed at full arm's length by her *coiffeur*, her feet in a dainty tub. The color in her cheeks, usually a pallid though still smooth olive, he attributed to the steam; and at once he began playfully to open doors.

"Whom have you now hidden?" he asked gaily as he jerked at the knobs. "Ah! my little Josephine, do not deny it. I heard the hubbub."

"Heavens!" thought the lady. "If only he would be always like this! And now he has come at the wrong time."

To divert him, she thought wildly of letting her negligée slip from her shoulder. Once such a sight would have transported a conqueror. But that shoulder had lost its curve; neck-cords were beginning to tauten; there were hollows under the lustrous eyes; and she was growing plump in the wrong places. She drew the negligée around her.

And now he was at the fourth door; and in despair she stretched out her hand, calling, "Napoleon, come and tell once again that you love me."

Too late! The wardrobe suddenly jerked open and re-

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vealed the Despeaux like a peony among the hanging dresses and her bandboxes; and from the adjoining closet out tumbled the snuff-colored Odiotte, and with him a shower of claret-plush jewel-cases and pearls all over the old gold of the carpet.

“Ah! I thought so. You again, Despeaux, and you too, Odiotte, leech that you are! So madame—” to Josephine —“you have deceived me again. No, no explanations are necessary. Nor from you thieves.” He pulled the bell-rope, ordering the lackey entering, “Summon Ouvrette!” —and to Ouvrette, “Take these wretches to Paris and lock them up in Bicêtre.”

Up from the foot-bath she got, ran toward the door to intercept them. She had lost; but these poor people must not go to jail.

“It is my fault, Sire,” she cried. “Do not visit your wrath on them!”

In vain she implored. He gazed at the wet prints her feet, still pink from the bath, made on the floor.

“Only in water,” he said, “but you would not care if they were made in my blood. . . . But I grow thetic. It is wrong to take you seriously. Your weightiest thought is lighter than the feathers for which these people mulct you so outrageously. When will you learn that I will give you millions gladly but would not have you squander a franc? Don’t whimper. It does not help your looks.”

And another door banged shut.

Her imperious husband gone, and the two tradespeople under guard, she resigned herself to her attendants and tears.

“Why, Avrillon, will men never understand women?

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Does he want me to like jack-boots as I would a new hat, or should I spend my mornings admiring the cold muzzles of his cannon?" She sighed. "I am sure I try not to buy all these things, but I simply cannot resist. They say: 'Your Majesty, I have a negligée especially designed for you! . . . A new heron-plume we have imported.' I am tempted. Besides, it would be unkind to refuse when they have gone to all this trouble for me. And Heaven knows I do not spend all on myself. My door is besieged with petitioners. I am almoner to every one, am I not, Mesdames de Montesquieu et d'Avrillon?" The two smilingly nodded. "There, take that negligée, the necklace. I do not want them now!"

She called for her mirror, the one in which Marie Antoinette had seen her hair, in such a few short months, turn white. Yes—cords, sags, matronly plumpness in the wrong places—it told the truth. Too old for love in the boudoir! To herself that did not matter, for despite Barras's filthy stories, she had never been sensual. Frail she might be but never through mad desire. If only she could hold him!—m-m-m—She dressed superbly and, until old age stiffened her, would always be graceful. Fully arrayed, the ensemble should still be perfect. She dried her tears. She must not cry so stormily and destroy the one weapon left—her elegance.

In his own apartment Napoleon tossed his documents aside. He felt remorse; remembered the hours, first of the love he had felt, though unrequited, latterly the calmer passages of companionship; also her truly gracious and regal bearing at state affairs, her good sense—at times—and her intuitions, which, he must admit, had helped.

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And she had been generous in defending those two wretches. He rang for Roustan and sent him to ask her Majesty to walk with the emperor in the park.

“Do not worry,” he said to her when they met and he drew her arm through his. “I shall release your culprits to-morrow.”

She was happy for the time. His mood was not turbulent now. He paced with her slowly over the sloping lawns, under the trees whose leaves, drenched with the sunlight gold, seemed to drip with it, as though the sunlight were water.

They conversed about adding to their acres. There was a plot adjoining, with a delightful garden which they desired. But the owner was so set that even Napoleon could not sway her. “France,” he observed with a laugh, “must be pretty free under my rule when an old maid will not heed the wish of an Emperor.”

They were passing through the orchards, and Josephine pulled down a branch of coral blooms for him to smell; pointed to a fork in the tree where a redbreast nestled, beak over the rim of the interlaced twigs and beady eyes so still. He smiled. It was an amusing study for him, fitter for honeymooning couples who might consider the bird on her eggs a symbol. She thought of this too, moved hastily away.

Then—more appropriate for her day—by a corner of the gray château tower, she showed him her violets.

At dinner, too, he was thoughtful of her in every way, and insisted on having the little Charles Napoleon at table. Playfully he dipped a cube of sugar in the sherry. Fascinated, the child watched the red eat into the white, then greedily reached for it. Napoleon restrained him.

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“A king,” he said, “should show self-control.” Altogether it was a happy family reunion.

Still, as she fell asleep that night, she would rather have had him a little more selfishly passionate. When one is forty and four—and of the creoles who age so early—the kindness of a husband may be a little too brotherly.

CHAPTRÉ XXIII

He Leaves Josephine's Room

AFEW weeks later, at Boulogne-by-the-Sea, whither he had gone to see the Grand Army, Josephine had news which further alarmed her. Bourrienne, after leaving Malmaison, had ridden to Pont Carré and there had listened with sympathy to Fouché's complaints of ill treatment at the hands of their master and sneers at his ambitions.

“He rides to Milan, eh?” observed the death’s-head. “He has developed quite a passion for crowns.”

And Bourrienne vouchsafed nothing at all of his chief’s plans for ultimate Italian independence, though some might have considered this an instance when not to betray a confidence was treachery.

He did, however, acquaint the arch-spy with the emperor’s passionate outbreak about an heir. And Fouché next day saw that the report reached a lady in waiting who was in his pay. She in turn retailed it to the empress.

All this tended to increase her capriciousness; and they had a tiff in bed, at midnight, over some girl whose cheek the emperor had tweaked. It was not one of his few really serious affairs, not even a passing fancy; but Josephine would have it that she was mortally hurt. At first he tried to console her; but the little clock on the mantel struck

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three; he had a grand review in the morning and moreover was pondering over the new coalition which, he had just had word, was being formed against him. Besides, even his pillow was wet with her tears, and he disliked cold moisture on his face, as his Holiness had learned when he let the sacred oil run over at the coronation. So now when the little clock finished its chiming, he jumped out of bed and left the room.

Once he had given some sage advice to a young general about to marry. "A married couple," he lectured the bridegroom, "when under the same roof, should always pass the night together. Thus they preserve good conduct on both sides and cement the union. None of their thoughts escape each other. But, apart, they soon become estranged."

Now, however, like the beautiful Portia, he found it hard to follow his own precepts. He who was so ready to pardon now was boyishly unwilling to give in, and he found sleeping alone quite a relief. He continued to give her something of fraternal affection and credited her with all her good qualities, but only infrequently did he visit her bedside.

And she, to bolster her pride and conceal her hurt, began to practise a pathetic deceit. She fell to boasting before her acquaintances.

"The emperor," she would say, at *déjeuner*, with the appropriate look of confusion, "spent the night with me." Occasionally the statement was true, more often not. But girlishly she would look around the circle of faces for signs of admiration and envy.

Still, there were distractions enough at Boulogne—the quick fitting up of their temporary quarters, which faced

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the Paris road and looked out on the sea; the social affairs of her court; and particularly that grand review, which came off, every one said, with considerable *éclat* in the morning.

Her husband sat on a little green hill above the sea, on Dagobert's stone throne which had been brought from Rheims for the occasion. At the foot of the throne, magnificently arrayed, were the grand constable, archchancellor, and twenty-four dignitaries of the Empire. Behind the throne, scores of torn battle-flags, all crimson and green and purple and gold, crackled in the breeze until their staves bent like bows. There were also sprightly bevies of ladies; while below, on the plain, stood eighty thousand warriors, in dark blue, sky-blue, pink, apple-green, and plum; topped by gilt casques, shapkas or furred bearskins, and beet-red, white, or orchid plumes; and bristling with cannon muzzles, bright head-stalls, or flame-tipped bayonets and lances. They were arranged *en échelon*; that is, the form of a checker-board, the green squares of the plain alternating with those made by the gay regiments, with the less immobile cavalry on the borders; all like a garden of bright colors down to the sea.

A few miles out on its blue, flecked this day with white-caps, cruised the admirals of England. Almost they could hear the whipping of the flags, the call of the bugles, and through their telescopes pick out a little man, plainest of all, as the dazzling checker-board shifted to become a kaleidoscope and the bright squares marched and wheeled before him.

He was distributing bits of ribbon, small but much-prized. Sometimes he would say to Berthier, his chief of staff, or Duroc, "Pick me out a hero—from the Hussars

He Leaves Josephine's Room

—or the Lancers.” Usually, however, as at the Tuileries, his memory served.

It was a very busy day; and there were many other things besides armies to inspect: the swamps which he had ordered sluiced and drained, huge ovens where bread for his soldiers was to be baked, great walls of masonry for docks and ammunition depots, the rigging of ships, and the completion of a gigantic fleet of flat-bottomed scows which were to convey his soldiers to the cliffs rising out of the blue across the Channel.

At last the emperor paused, supperless, by the harbor, trying perhaps to restore a little of that energy which each morning must set a nation at work.

The lateness of the hour left the stone *quai* like a little deserted stage, with a forest of masts and crosstrees in the harbor for a setting, and lighted by a moon fast rounding out, over a row of sagging old houses, and falling on his figure, also approaching the round, and now leaning against a stone post on the *quai*. The gables of the old row cut an irregular toothed shadow out of the gold; and in this shadow stood two other figures jauntily plumed, side-burned, and becaped.

For a long time he stood thus motionless, in a silence unbroken save by the clank of an anchor-chain, the crunch of a hawser suddenly tautened by the swell, or the song of a sailor black in a golden port-hole.

“For once he looks weary,” said one of the becaped figures, Duroc.

The other, Rapp, bent down and began throwing little pebbles in the yeasty water.

“Who wouldn’t,” he replied, “after a day like this, and that following a ride from Milan to Paris, which he made

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in three days and a half, and from Paris here? And he makes meals a sip of wine, a gulp of coffee, a mere pretense of eating. As for sleep, there is none.

“But he should stop that study of the Channel there. He is no *bâtarde* of an admiral. The man is not born who can beat him on the field, without great odds, but that way lies disaster.” And the dropping pebbles disappeared with little gulps like those of drowning men.

Suddenly the emperor spoke from the stone post on the moonlit stage.

“Duroc, Rapp,” he asked with bitterness. “Can you tell me why they hate me so over there?” His arm swept the west, where over seven leagues of water a blur rose out of the sea-line and the English watch-fires trembled. “*Tiens!* I can. It is because I have sinned in not being born in a palace. This is a class conflict, not alone between the aristocracy and the common people whom in France, Italy, all Europe, I head, but of several score kings and princelings against one man—myself. The game is ‘king of the mountain.’ I am on top. They are trying to pull me down.”

In the pause that followed, Duroc remarked to Rapp: “England is an obsession with him. Why, they are like, England and he, two implacable foes who do not at once come to the death-grip, but in whose glance and tones you catch at once the deathless hatred. Like two gamblers, they sit late at the cards, trying to hoodwink each other, blind to the inevitable end—the duel to death at dawn.”

But now the monologue was resumed in the moonlight.

“Further I have committed the sin of being successful. I have made France powerful; destroyed the old balance of Europe, a convenient adjustment of races by which

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England profited, maintaining her alliances and playing banker for all.

“For three years I have been a peaceful rival. I started to cut down my armies and disperse my batteries. But I was too strong in the ways of peace. And so a legitimate rival must be pulled down by an illegitimate war which they try to legitimatize by hook or crook. How do they accomplish that? *Dame!* the silk stockings of their parliament, the periwigs of the counting-house and cathedrals, come to the aid of this third silly George. They bemoan in righteous horror my tyranny, above all, my ‘usurpation’ of a throne to which I was elected by a vote of the people—three and a half million to eight thousand. So they pray for the return of these *lawful* princes who bled France white and who were chased out by the people who voted me in.

“And they get the English farmers by the ears, preach this tyranny and bloodthirstiness of mine from press and pulpit and parliament, draw cartoons, write doggerel, create libels; all to show the ‘gallant hearts of oak’ what I am.

“Duroc, Rapp, you have lived with me night and day. But do you know what I am? No, you do not! I am ‘Bony,’ ‘the Drinker of Blood,’ a ‘liar,’ ‘assassin,’ and ‘thief.’ And beware of me, my friends. I am inclined to effeminate vices. I am a ‘pervert.’ I ‘have committed incest,’ ‘seduced a stepdaughter, Hortense,’ slept with my sister! And they even attack my mother. I, say they, am the son of Paoli.”

“All this,” remarked Rapp *sotto voce* to the other, “has at last got under his skin.”

“Why, this propaganda has swept even the colonies. Jerome writes me that America has swallowed every word.

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Mothers use my name to frighten children. A hundred years hence they will be writing history based on these vicious libels.

“It is thus that they arouse the farmers and shopkeepers into a frenzy ; inflame them against me as though this were a new crusade and I were the infidel. They fight, my friends, in the sacred name of Liberty and the pound sterling, for God and their lost shipments and sales !

“And are they so much holier than I ? They shelter my foes, send letters of remittance to plotters against my life, tear my reputation to shreds, and break their treaties.

“Consider these last for a moment. I gave up Taranto, as agreed, to match their Malta. But do they give up Malta ? No, they do not. A little instance, but significant. And they protest my overtures to Spain. Of course, I brought pressure. In return for Spanish support, I will organize effete Spain, make her strong. Again my sin is that I get there first. Then they say I am the mailed fist. Was England soft of hand when she forbade Spain to sell me ammunition and, without declaration of war, seized Spanish ships and impressed Spanish and Dutch and French seamen ? It is righteous for them to make alliances, to intrigue for them ; dastardly for me. It makes a difference, my friends, whose ox is gored. Ah ! you cannot tell me that the English are gruff but honest. Their bluffness is a mask. They are as smooth as their own silk stockings.

“And where can their political charges be justified ? I found France attacked, and in pursuit of her foes led her armies over her borders. I have put our conquests,

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Italy, Holland, Belgium, forward two hundred years. It is so, too, through my influence, with Switzerland and the Rhenish states. Wherever I go I leave new laws, new spirit—something of slaughter, perhaps, but that is the way of life, since men will make wars—something of regimentation and gagging the press, for you must have system—but much more of life for a little of death.

“And now they have formed this new coalition against me. England, Russia, Austria, Prussia, all ready to go in. Do they think I will sit tight within my kingdom in the ways of peace till they pull me down? Fools! I would have stayed peaceful, but they would not let me alone. By their very hostility they have put new thoughts in my head.”

He paused, then looked toward the watch-fires throbbing over the line of the sea; and with the rising tide, his voice gathered resonance. “They say I am drunk with power and triumph. Let them beware! I shall be drunker before I am through!”

Rapp, ever careless of etiquette, once the emperor’s back was turned, took to his dropping of pebbles, which sounded as they disappeared so like the gulps of drowning men. And the emperor, irritated by the sound, turned sharply and made for the house on the Paris Road.

“Fouché, Talleyrand, many whom I do not trust I use,” he said as he bade them farewell. “You alone and Eugène and Lannes—a few others perhaps—I trust, still call by the beloved thou. God grant that nothing may happen to you!”

He disappeared through the postern.

“A long speech,” said Rapp, “for a master of the laconic. But there was nothing of the whiner in it. I heard him say the same things, fling them in the teeth

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of the British ambassador. How much do you think there is of sincerity in it, Duroc?"

"It is not for a soldier to weigh, only to follow," returned Duroc, who was noted for his elegance and reserve. "But there is more than you think."

"I!" exploded Rapp. "I would defend him to God himself. You refer to Talleyrand or Fouché."

"Or Lafayette or de Staël or any of the praters, if you will, and I will leave you out. That last-named lady, voluble sphinx, declares that the Corsican vine has so overspread the fair trunk of France that the vine mistakes itself for the trunk. It seems to me that the trunk might have fallen had it not been for this vine."

"Still—that statement, 'Drunken with power!'" observed the careless Rapp, on the sudden grown thoughtful. "It is not only England and the coalition that drive him on. It is what a thousand ancestors have bred in him —his very nature."

"But what a nature!" said the reserved one simply. "I only know I would follow it to the abyss!"

"*Diable!*" returned the other. "Should there be an abyss, you will not break my fall to the bottom. I shall precede you!"

Upstairs, in the house by the Paris Road, Napoleon sat silent in his room. On his desk were despatches telling that Austria was arming, Russia fast coming on, also some English papers which Fouché had thoughtfully forwarded. In these were bits of doggerel, estimates of the numbers in the imperial harem, and elaborations of the Hortense and Pauline libels, together with a quaint collection of the most villainous cartoons. A multitude of tongues whispered in the fireplace, and, when he moved

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over his charts, shadows like the cartoons were thrown by fire and candle light upon the wall.

Of all these developments, Charles Maurice Talleyrand de Périgord, ex-abbé, Prince de Benevento and Grand Chamberlain of the Empire, had a reading quite different from that of Monsieur le Général Rapp and the governor of the palace, Monsieur le Maréchal Duroc. They had quoted the harangue on the *quai* at court, from a sincere desire to help their chief. But the grand chamberlain only observed, as he most diabolically took snuff: "*Mon Dieu!* A man is at a bad pass when he begins to defend himself." He seemed highly delighted at the way things were going.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Eagles of Austerlitz

IT was fortunate that Napoleon, during those glorious years of the Consulate, had put his house of France in order. For thenceforward his days and his nights were to be taken up with less of conflict in the council-chamber, more of that in the field, with marches and counter-marches, and endless maneuvers—down to the end.

Not that, his armies once under way, he was not, like Josephine in her court, reasonably content. One is only happy when properly functioning. Certainly now he was doing that, and the melancholy which seized upon him occasionally he banished in toil. "Work, work," he would say to Duroc, "I have an insatiable appetite for it. Even in my dreams I am at work"—which was a factor that his enemies overlooked in their search for motives in the man.

His armies, however, did not embark in those flatboats. With Austria and Russia mobilizing, it was foolish to send them across the Channel, so he broke up his camp at Boulogne and drove his troops by forced marches over his new roads and the Rhine. To reach the Black Forest, his foes allotted him so many weeks; he did it in half the time. For there was this curious way about him, that while other generals were still pointing their fingers at

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maps, his head with the plan in it was already galloping to the appointed field.

He did not march with his troops ; it was wiser to stay in his palace, as items in the "Moniteur," the official gazette, duly announced. So he lulled suspicion as to his objective and masked his speed. Again, it was wise to send his Grand Army toward Strasbourg and the Black Forest as though to strike the Austrian front ; further, to have Murat march a few files of dragoons round and round the trees of the Black Forest, above the valley where lay the Austrian outposts, while the main body of his troops encircled to the Austrian rear before Russia came up.

By that time he had stepped in his caleche, ridden out of the Tuileries, and was astride his white horse on the field, as delicately manipulating his hammering battalions as a fencer his foils. And to keep guarded the long communication lines, his army's heart ; to despatch enough regiments to hold off the Russians, leaving sufficient on the Austrian front to mask his moves ; to circle the main body in the rear and yet leave enough room for play between the Austrians and their allies ; to keep these encircling lines in touch again with his lines of communication ; to watch every feint of the foe and always mass sufficient numbers at the critical point ; to calculate how long it would take a division, scaling hills, fording rivers, to complete a march and calculate correctly ; to have every corps coördinate, every supply train come up, every thrust on time ; further, to restore lost morale in catastrophe, and when sudden attack or flood or fog or storm or act of God disposes of a preconceived plan of battle, to invent, on the dot and in the face of Providence, a

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winning new one—and all in vast lands for the field of the duel—takes more than a fencer's keen eye and suppleness of wrist; rather, an elasticity of brain, an eagle vision, and an iron will that are superhuman.

These are the things he accomplished in this, as in other campaigns; and when the Austrians woke up, after two weeks of busy maneuver and engagement, it was to find the Russians blocked and themselves marching out, at Ulm, to lay down their arms before a little man, hated and rapidly growing fat, on a white horse, and in a plain gray greatcoat.

Then at the head of his armies he came to the Danube, entered the proud capital of Vienna, delivered in terse terms his ultimatums to the Emperor Joseph. When that emperor, with some asperity, refused, he raced down the palace steps, and marched his troops right out again, toward the Russian army which, with some Austrian reinforcements, had encamped near a little village named Austerlitz.

“When he called next week,” so he had left word for Emperor Joseph, “his terms would be a trifle less modest.” These he debated as he drew up his troops in front of the Russians and bivouacked for the night by a little hard-frozen stream called the Goldbach.

About midnight he left his tent for the picket-line. Over him, a third of a mile away, towered Pratzen Hill; he could see the allied fires twinkling through fir and spruce, starring the snowy steeps. There should have been fear in his heart, for he was in a hostile country, far from his base, with Bohemia and Hungary on his flanks, two Prussian armies mobilizing in his rear. And opposite him lay encamped a hundred and twenty thou-

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sand men, confronting his seventy thousand. Like a gambler he had risked all on a throw; defeat would mean a cataclysm. Yet in his heart was a great calm.

“Caulaincourt says,” remarked the ‘mad Junot, as the figure ahead of them buttoned the gray greatcoat against the wind, “that to see him throw down the gage in the council-chamber is to see him at his best. But Caulaincourt is a babbler, unacquainted with true glory. It is here, on the battle-field, that our emperor is the god.”

“Sometimes,” whispered Rapp to a fellow-rider, “Junot is not so mad as he seems.”

Rapidly with his eye Napoleon now raked the snowy terrain—the tents and fires of the foe on the open plain north, on the hill in the center, and those massed to the south; then his own inferior and exposed lines to the west, stretched out over seven miles of crusted ponds and a line of river so thin that it seemed, in the rising moon, like a thread of wire with dew frozen on it.

The black masses bivouacked in the snow on the Russian left caught and held him.

He reined in his horse and leaning familiarly forward toward them, over his horse’s withers, suddenly asked, “Who, gentlemen, is the greatest commander?”

“Yourself, Sire,” came the chorus—seven frosted plumes of flattery on the air. The other seven, Lannes, Rapp, Ney, Davoust, and the boldest among them, were silent.

At these the emperor glanced approvingly, at the flatterers made a swift gesture of impatience.

“A foolish reply, when I asked for an analysis. The greatest is he who makes no mistakes about the enemy’s blunders.”

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Again he raked the landscape.

“And the allied blunder will be there.” He pointed to the Russians’ left.

“There they are massing to turn our right. We have thinned our right; will thin it a little more to tempt them, and withdraw a little. Meantime, you, General Lannes, will hold on our left; and, you, General Soult and Bernadotte, in the center, suggesting that we are too weak and inferior in numbers to attack. Vandamme and Saint-Hilaire shall meantime gain the foot of the hill; then, when we give way on our weakened right—note the prophecy, messieurs—they will weaken their center on the southwest slope and leave the hill to press their supposed advantage. Then we shall strike, throw in our reserves, our Imperial Guard, cut through north and south of the hill, drive our wedges in, and the day will be over. Sometimes I change my plans; but I shall not change this one. Such, gentlemen, will be the plan of battle.”

The soldiers, drowsing around the fire, which the imperial party now approached, heard the clink of accoutrements, the crunch of compressed saddles, through the gloom. They leaped from their backs and elbows to their feet, challenged them, then, in the moonlight, which shone fitfully between the scudding clouds, recognized the riders. They began to cheer: “Vive l’Empereur!”—but more often it was “Mon général!” Embarrassed by the mistake in title, some of the old veterans, who had served with him when he was a sallow stripling, stammered out apologies.

The emperor rode into the circle of the firelight.

“Never mind, my brave fellows,” he said, leaning down and patting the tallest on the shoulder, “since it shows

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you love me, I prefer, ‘mon général.’” At once the cheers were renewed. And these were taken up by the watchers at the adjoining fires until “Long live the Emperor!” rolled all along the seven miles of front. In their enthusiasm some of the reckless seized the bundles of straw on which they had been sleeping and threw them in the fires. Regiment after regiment followed the example, and the whole west was encircled with flames as by a swift travelling prairie-fire, turning the snowy shoulders of Pratzen Hill opposite to wine. And the sleeping Russians got up on their elbows in the fir copses to gaze down into the valley; then, growling, “To-morrow Bony will sing another tune,” rolled over to snore once more.

In the plain below, Lannes turned toward his chief. In the illumination the features of this favorite of Napoleon seemed sculptured of granite, but a granite most delicately molded. His bold eyes never fell, even before his emperor’s; and he was not given to flattery. But, “Sire,” he now said, “you have made a mistake. The greatest general is he whose soldiers, to do him honor, will burn their beds on a night like this!”

“Yet, Lannes,” dryly replied Napoleon, “Alexander over there, and all their Majesties in Europe assembled, assure you I am an upstart. But can they show a ‘right’ more ‘divine’ than that?” and his sweeping gesture took in the fires and cheers; then, “Good night, gentlemen; rest well. We shall have need of strength to-morrow.” And, spurring his horses, he sought his tent for a three hours’ nap.

With dawn, a fog, white but with more of gray in it than the surrounding snow, enveloped both armies. Already Napoleon was astir.

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“Good morning, Sire,” said one of his aides, “and congratulations!”

“On what, Lauriston?”

“The anniversary of your coronation.”

“So it is an anniversary, then. Fine! We shall celebrate it appropriately,” and turning, he sent off Savary to see if Davoust had further thinned his line.

The Russian outposts, feeling out this movement of Davoust’s on the French right, reported it; and two allied divisions started forward. The advance was concealed by the mist, which, though it had lightened a little, still swathed the combatants with floating wisps and scarfs, leaving not a corporal’s squad entire to the vision. Only details could be seen: the dulled gleam of a helmet, a horse’s bay haunch, the spire of a breakfast fire—little cameos framed in smoke. Meanwhile, aides, all a-tension, were galloping up the mound where the emperor stood, calm in the center of his restive staff. There they gasped out their reports from the backs of dancing steeds, did a volte-face, and disappeared in the gray to find out what was indicated—general advance or mere skirmishes of pickets—by the rattles of musketry which sounded to left and right out of the mist.

Then suddenly the blanket was lifted. The sun rose glorious over Pratzen Hill. It picked out an infinitude of shining snow crystals, bayonets, and casques; impeared the seven-mile chain of frozen river and front opposite the hill; enriched the scarlets and greens and blues of twenty divisions of French foot, ranging in serried squares down the seven miles; the sea of cavalry plumes at their flanks; and the wheeling batteries back of them. It revealed, too, on that mound in the center, the little hat

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of the commander, a plain dot in a knot of his marshal's plumes, also the allied hosts now marching down Pratzen Hill and across the open against Soult; in the plain north against Lannes, and in the south, great masses of them, against Davoust's thinned blue line.

There, in the south, lay the trap and the danger. But on they came, first the fur-capped and fur-caped Cossacks, in the distance appearing like toy soldiers trotting briskly over the snow, their little lances at all angles; then, more stolidly, the Russian foot, like a muddy brown flood, oozing over the white, now eating into the blue. And everywhere sounded the crackle of musketry, intermittent on the left and center, but continuous and in a sharp crescendo in the south; while all over the plain and hill, as if with its coming the sun had caused everything to flower, there was a sudden blossoming of cannon—swift stabs of flame like orange stalks with scarlet-lined blossoms of smoke at the ends.

The marshals gathered round him teased him to begin; but he dismissed them with this word of caution: "You know my plan of battle. Do not grow hot and slip the leash too soon. In the appointed second I shall send word." The impatient group—Lannes, Ney, Soult, Bernadotte, Duroc, Rapp, Bessières, and Oudinot—broke up and galloped in different directions to their respective posts; and Napoleon turned to the spy-glass, which he rested on a cadet's shoulder.

On this axis the instrument swung south. The brown flood was eating farther into the blue. Davoust was giving way; no rout, slowly and in good order. The bait had worked.

Now he did not need his glass. Two hundred yards in

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front of him, Cossacks and Austrian whitecoats were engaging Legrand hand to hand. They were retreating. It was time to charge for the hill.

“Tell Marshal Soult,” he ordered Savary, “to send Vandamme for the hill, with Saint-Hilaire to support him.”

In a scant two minutes, the aide had thrown his horse to its haunches before Soult’s black, a half-mile away, and was gesticulating toward the hill. Almost the emperor could hear the words of command; and saw plainly the two divisions—Saint-Hilaire’s white-strapped blues, Vandamme’s red-collared greens, at attention—detaching themselves from Soult’s squares—in the open, marching steadily—now bayonets out, on the run, leaving little squirming figures in their wake, but closing up—finally deflecting into little blue and green runlets around the black-roofed houses at the foot of the hill.

Across the circle of his glass moved little men with bayonets plunging. At last they had emerged from the black roofs, were in the fir copses, only puffs of smoke telling of their advance. But now around the shoulder of the hill, full on their flanks, came more Russians. The blue and green detachments in the lead were being hurled downward. And the last blue and green waves arriving at the foot of the hill were tumbled back on themselves like breakers that suddenly hit the shelving beach—solid breakers no longer, but turned into a colorful channel where many counter-currents ran.

If a glass be powerful enough—and an emperor’s usually is—one can see many things in a swaying battle. Where the glass fails, one can see them in engagements near at hand or the fancy can supply them—the little

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details: a bayonet ripping upward; a hand suddenly pressed to the side to stanch a red stream; a face convulsed with mortal terror. But one must not yield to imagination. What matters death, provided it be glorious and swift? Any commander worth his salt would risk as much, nay, has risked as much, as his meanest soldier. Indeed, was his own body not covered with scars?

Besides, if one would either see or win battles, one must be oblivious of irrelevant detail; see not the racking of the individual body, but great masses of bodies; general movements, not hands suddenly pressed to the side.

An aide, quite concerned about the colorful mêlée at the front of the hill, grew too eager.

“They falter, Sire! Is it not time to send Soult in?”

“Who commands here, Monsieur le Général, you or I? Saint-Hilaire and Vandamme are holding them. It is enough.”

So, for an hour, he imperturbably watched the struggle, the glass swinging now to the north, now to the south, again to the center. In the north, Lannes, with his infantry, was standing up well. Yes, now Lauriston could order him in. First the barrage, then the charge. Three minutes by the watch—the one the old archdeacon had given him so long ago in Ajaccio—and Berthier’s guns blossomed again, described their smoking arcs over the heads of those immobile men under Lannes; then the ranged infantry platoons started forward. Walk, trot, now the charge, bristling with bayonets—and—since again we must forget all those details, the squirming bodies left behind—a beautiful movement! Their squares, as they cross into the area of fire, constantly diminished in dimension, but were forever closing up; and kept care-

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fully between each square a lane open for Murat's and Kellermann's cavalry, hovering on their flanks, to dash through, when the time came for the final annihilation.

By God! They were off! The infantry had shattered the white and brown lines; and down through the lanes, between the racing foot regiments, swept the colorful streams; Murat's beet-red plumes in the lead, on one side; on the other, Kellermann's red-breeched dragoons, the sun making whirling lightnings of their sabers.

Ah! They had outdistanced the foot, were crowding the white squares, biting in deeper—so deep that the retreat was turning into a rout; and the once solid allied squares had turned into mere trickles of fugitives, racing for Austerlitz, and pursued all over the northern plain by solitary horsemen, now curving sabers over their heads, or plunging lances downward. And now Lannes's foot was between the Austrian center on the hill and the shattered allied right. The "Lion-heart" had driven *his* wedge in. All had gone according to schedule.

The glass again—east—yes, on the hill Vandamme and Saint-Hilaire would soon break. South—Davoust's thinned lines had been pressed back far enough, almost to the big ponds at their backs. To give more ground would be fatal. And now, down the south slope of the hill, heedless of the catastrophe on their right, the Russians were racing on Davoust to press their supposed advantage. It was the appointed moment for the general advance.

At once the little mound became all action. Short resonant commands vibrated in the air, and aides galloped off on smoking horses, one after the other, like a flight of arrows shot from the imperial bow.

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And now came the thunder of his fourteen hundred guns, the whirlwind of many charges. Over the plains, white no longer, but dotted with black figures and mud-died with hoofs, in swift succession swept column after column. First, Soult's and Bernadotte's red-collared blues, straight across to the hill to support Saint-Hilaire; then, when the Russian Guard came down to crush Bernadotte, Rapp's gold and green to reinforce him, Rapp now with sword broken and head bashed in. Hard after them galloped Bessières's red-breeched dragoons, diagonally to flank the Russians on the southern slope; then Soult's white-strapped squares; and, always the last cast of the emperor's dice, the Imperial Guard, off parallel with the French front, to save Davoust, the stern Duroc at their head, as calm and elegant as though riding in a Tuileries review.

So they rode by for the final charge—long lines of pink or plum, gilt-edged green, white-strapped sky-blue and scarlet; of cockades, furred bearskins, or gold helmets; of lances and curving sabers. Long lines of legs, pretty well in unison though racing fast; of gantleted fists holding up reins; of twinkling-eared mounts; of shoulders against shoulders, flanks against flanks; all sun-smitten and foaming with plumes. Lines, too, of eager boys' faces, adoring eyes on the emperor, chests almost bursting; and of older faces, eyes alone giving fire to their immobile bronze. And all these long lines, some nearly ruler-straight, others bulging out through individual ardor, or bending as they wheeled, plunged across that open field in different directions, with heads thrown back in their pride, voices lifted on high until they became a continuous roar passing the emperor. Human nature at its

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best or worst, these bursts of energy were magnificent and overwhelming; and all controlled, as are the tides of the sea by the moon, by a little man in a worn greatcoat, astride a white horse; his figure no longer a straight line from head to heel, but growing a little more like the moon; his stirrups shortened, thighs fattened, and that little paunch over the saddle seeming to thrust his shoulders back—that is, if one did not take into account a set of nobly molded features and a most extraordinary pair of eyes.

But now the last column had passed. North, Lannes was still pressing the pursuit; opposite, Rapp and Soult and Vandamme were climbing upward; on the southern slope, Bessières was driving in flank-wise; and, a half-mile southwest of him, Davoust had reformed, and he, with Duroc and the Guard, were driving the Russians out on the treacherous lakes. It was over. The whole allied front had cracked—like those lakes which the shells were tearing into uptilted cakes and fragments.

On the mound, Napoleon looked through his glass for the last time. *Diable!* Drowning figures were clutching at those fragments or falling in the dark waters between. He telescoped the instrument shut, handed it to the cadet, and spurred his horse down from the mound and over the trodden field. A hundred years later, victors might slaughter helpless Russians by the wholesale in the lakes and marshes, but in 1806 victory must not be tarnished.

“Save all that can be saved,” he ordered such officers as could hear; and when the afternoon sun waned, the first to receive the little ribbons of the Legion of Honor were those who had plunged into the lakes to save the drowning Cossacks.

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“Never again,” he said, “shall I have a braver army, nor shall any commander!”

The sun set gloriously on Austerlitz that day; but with the evening shadows he did not rest. He still rode over the field, ordering coats taken from the allied slain and thrown over his wounded, bonfires to be built by them.

Later, when the moon came out from behind scudding clouds, it revealed him on his knees, raising the head of some wounded youth or veteran to pour down the relieving brandy. By his order a wagon filled with flasks followed at his heels.

Once he turned to see a brown-cassocked figure edging between the press of bodies. And on the austere features the conqueror thought he detected a look of reproach.

“Ah, Monsieur Monk, I see that you think I like to bring these poor fellows so low. But this is a soldier’s life. It is a priest’s duty to point the way to heaven. Is there a surer way than to die for one’s country?”

No one save the God the brown one served, or professed to serve, could have told just what was in the conqueror’s heart. Still, there was no curse on dying lips, in glazing eye no look of reproach.

And this, too, should be written down, that the conqueror’s glance was sorrowful, his touch very gentle.

CHAPTER XXV

A Paradox and a Prussian Lady

AFTER Austerlitz many battles followed: Saalfeld, Erfurt, Jena, Auerstädt, Friedland, a score of others. And Hamelin, Stettin, Magdeburg, Hamburg—a bushel basket of fortified cities—he set on and captured. And all these meetings with the foe turned out his victories except Eylau, a draw, in which he himself was nearly captured in a cemetery. Perhaps it might have been better had there been more drawn battles. One may win too often, grow a too great contempt for odds, through very invincibility become vulnerable.

But now Prussia and Russia, with Austria, lay at his feet; and the king and czar appeared at Tilsit to treat with the victor. Under a gorgeous canopy, on a raft in the middle of the Niemen, he met the czar, the two monarchs approaching from opposite sides to solve the question of precedence. Here there were bear-hugs and many large and comfortable words. Also there were love-feasts with the czar and king and Queen Louisa. So the negotiations continued, satisfactorily for himself, through these hot summer days of 1807.

He had put up at the ancient Schalauner Haus in Tilsit and was breakfasting there on a July morning. His

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increasing weight was noticeable; but it could not be attributed to the pleasures of the table. For he ate sparingly—eggs *au miroir*, a salad of beans, barely touched, and a little Parmesan cheese, with coffee.

“Did you notice,” he suddenly asked Duroc, who now alone attended him, “how shocked the czar and the king were at my anecdote last night? Sinfully I began, ‘When I was a lieutenant in the regiment of La Fère?’ Up went eyebrows; horrified they glanced at each other. However, I stressed my *faux pas*, this acknowledgment of my inferiority. ‘I repeat,’ said I, ‘when I had the *honor* to be a sublieutenant in the regiment of La Fère.’ ‘Quite so, quite so,’ they replied politely; but they did not forgive me. What I want you to do now, Duroc, is to invite the queen of Prussia—alone—to dinner. She is dying to come.”

Duroc’s eyes did not go up. Not for him to question his commander’s decisions. Faithful, brave, and elegantly urbane, for all that stern exterior, he had been well chosen for the mission.

“Talleyrand was against this maneuver of the invitation,” the emperor continued. “Wishing to handle all negotiations himself, he professed to fear the queen’s beauty might undo me. *Tiens!* I am not one to sell France for a smile.

“I shall treat her with chivalry; but she will go away with—nothing. Then they will raise another cry to high Heaven, protesting my treatment of a woman. And with what justice? She comes mentally to seduce me. I shall outwit her and her cowardly husband and prime minister who send her to do what they cannot do themselves.”

The Parmesan and coffee finished, he wiped his mouth with an exquisite napkin, then rose, continuing his re-

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marks as he paced. So many admitted to his study had a picture of Napoleon like that, delivering opinions to the tattoo of his stride, easing up now and then for a jest, or stopping short to tweak an ear, pull a nose, pinch a cheek, to prove his good-will.

“Duroc, all these kings and queens amuse me”; he observed thus on the run. “If I were harmless, would play their game, my duplicity would not shock them, though it were twice what it is now. Then I should be ‘my beloved brother,’ ‘our dear cousin,’ a truly popular and feeble king.”

Why he thus risked his reputation for the laconic and yielded to these unburdenings, no one knew. Perhaps he considered it good propaganda. More likely it was merely a way of thinking aloud. At any rate Duroc could remember more than one violent harangue since that curious conversation of two years ago before on the *quai* of Boulogne. Almost he could tell what was coming now—yes, there he was running on. . . .

“And by the mark, what of their duplicity? Alexander, as he hugs me, reaches for a diplomatic dagger down his boot. He will not use it, if he can drive a good bargain with me—get Constantinople and Finland back. Well, he may have Finland but not Turkey. So far I have dominated him. But he is a double-dealer, and overnight he will leave me for a better price. Even now he secretly barters with England; and when, after Austerlitz, he gave his sacred pledge to appear at Pressburg, he sent the emperor of Austria with word that he was ‘unavoidably detained’; then, against all honor, withdrew his troops over the Memel by night, while I, honorable to the truce, was holding my troops back from pursuit.

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“Austria, too, then and always plays fast and loose. She was an ally of Prussia, but, jealous of her, held off, glad to see me strike her down. Then we have Prussia, whose poets sing of liberty and truth. She agreed with her allies not to sign a separate peace with me; but she signed under cover at Schönbrunn. That was one treaty. Then while Haugwitz, her minister, was signing with me, Hardenberg signed another and contrary treaty, number two, with England. And though she signed with me, she opened her towns to my foe, Russia, trying to stab me in the back. And to-night her charming queen will come to plead for the cities I have conquered and which Prussia herself took from their lawful ownership in '73. 'For justice,' she will ask with tears. What can you make of such people? Have they no sense of humor?

“And take your England once more, who raises the loudest cry to heaven, most violently beats her breast. To add to the holiness of her presence in Portugal and Spain, her impressment of foreign seamen and seizure of fleets on the high seas, she bombards peaceful Denmark, and leads off the Danish navy into her own harbors. And she dickers with me out of one corner of her mouth for Hanover; out of the other, with Prussia.”

He paused to look out of the window at the fair prospect of the silver-shining lindens and the city's churches, wherein even then the monarchs and prime minister were renewing their vows to God.

“What do you make of it all, Duroc? Only this, that they are all chafferers, open to barter and sale. If in this international game of *reversi* I am the most condemned, it is because I take the most tricks. Why, almost always, my friend, when I prepare for war, I prepare for it be-

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cause I know it to be inevitable, and I am forehanded; but I do not make the overt act, even though for French interests I might want it. I let them make it, through their stupidity!"

He turned to the other with his disarming smile.

"You see, my friend, I am at least an honest cynic. If mine be duplicity, I admit it. But if my Corsican fathers bequeathed me a flair for intrigue, these saintly foes have sharpened it—have taught me many things. And mark you this: compared to them, I am open and aboveboard in my duplicity. . . . Now, Monsieur le Maréchal, put your queen on the board. No lover shall treat her with greater tenderness."

The interview over, the stern and elegant Duroc started on his mission, meditating, as he waited for the queen, on this last paradox of the emperor. "Insensate" and "grandiose" as his foes might call these pronouncements of Napoleon, in his presence, they seemed so eminently sane.

There was much agitation, during the following hours, in the apartments the queen of Prussia had taken for her stay in Tilsit. Her ladies in waiting dressed her in her prettiest, after much study of the regal wardrobe; then Frederick William, a picture of white-haired benevolence, came in to advise with his Louisa. So did those stanch patriots, the Counts Haugwitz and Hardenberg.

Though perhaps they did not intend her literally to dispose of her person, it was a pretty mission the royal cuckold and her parliamentary panders were sending her on—to enslave the conqueror and get back those forts. Still, she felt not a little gratification, for she was proud

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of her charms. Had they not been sung by all the poets? And with this confidence to support her, also *le Maréchal Duroc*, who managed out of his elegant reserve to cull a few compliments, she entered the royal carriage, with dragoons fore and aft, rode with a great clatter to the Schalauner Haus, and was ushered upstairs.

It was a rather difficult position, for she was not without nobility, but resolutely she had decided on her tactics. Later she might bend to a little flattery if necessary, with smiles and—perhaps—a little of complaisance. But at first the *hauteur* of a queen by divine right would serve for this parvenu. Boors and bullies were so easily subdued by breeding coupled with beauty. So, train rustling, chin an inch and a half high, she entered the room.

The courtesy with which her host met her took down that well curved chin a quarter-inch. "What handsome pearls!" he observed. Not prepared for this, she forgot her snobbery, and began to upbraid him, her voice taking on the organ tones of full-throated tragedy.

"And is the conqueror of Prussia," she began, ignoring his compliment, "not to be magnanimous? Will he not give back to prostrate Prussia the cities torn from her? Will he not heed a woman who thus humiliates herself and bends on her knees before him?"

Napoleon thought the words poorly illustrated by her demeanor. It occurred to him, too, that the easiest way to get her off her high horse and turn the tragedy into comedy was to get her to sit down. But she had refused his offer of a chair. At once, concealing his amusement, he took a few steps around her—steps very light and swift for one of his increasing figure—seized a gilt chair,

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skilfully whisked the train out of the way with his foot, and slid the chair against the silk dress at precisely the point where it hid the backs of the royal knees.

With a world-conqueror behind one, so graciously offering a seat, and a wooing voice, “Won’t you sit down, dear lady?” what could one do but sit? Off came Tragedy’s mask; her voice became plaintive and reed-like; and the chin went down another quarter-inch.

Finally, over the crystal and roses and gleaming gold plate of the dinner-table, it went down altogether. She longed for recourse to tears, for she was getting nowhere. No chink appeared in the armor of polished civility he had put on. There was left—only flirtation.

So, over the roses, she smiled, using those eyes which the German poets had declared so extraordinarily fine. Detecting the pretty ruse, he took a rose from the vase, handed it to her. Now was the time. Her breath came hard, and she attempted to give even this difficulty of breathing a coquettish significance.

“You see,” the extraordinarily fine eyes as much as said, “all these palpitations are because of *you*!”

He held the rose, stem toward her, across the table.

“With Magdeburg?” eyes and voice, more reed-like than ever, said.

He withdrew the rose.

“Ah, my dear cousin”—how she hated that!—“Remember it is I who give, you who receive.”

A little later, she made her exit with what poise she could still muster, to throw herself disconsolately on the carriage cushions. Now she resented Duroc’s attentions, in fact dismissed him; and all the way home the lace handkerchief dabbed at the eyes poets had praised.

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She had come to enslave a conqueror and had left with nothing—as Napoleon had prophesied—except that rose, which she discovered she still held and passionately threw out of the window.

In his bedroom Napoleon was smiling. He had conquered at a game at which he hitherto had had no reputation. Then he made a grimace as he put on the queer nightcap which even emperors in those days wore. And the nightcap covered as queer a thought. This he put on paper in a letter to Josephine.

“Thus ends the farce,” he wrote. “Still, though she came to buy me, it was difficult for me to treat a woman so hardly.”

Through the warm days of summer, the dealing and shuffling continued. When they finally got up from the table, Napoleon emerged with the realms of Naples, Sicily, and Venice added to Italy, France, Belgium, and Holland. Spain, Denmark, Switzerland, and the Rhineland obeyed his least nod. Austria, Prussia, Russia, had been humbled and for the time absorbed as allies into his system. And many little states, which he did not actually acquire, through puppets were as good as his own. For all at once there was an odd scrambling on the part of the princelings of Europe for the fine prizes he had to hand out. He distributed crowns, made archdukes and sovereigns galore, then assimilated them into that system until it ranged over almost all Europe. Only far-off Sweden was left out, and England—England crouching in the mists across the Channel. And she had had her fangs drawn, had been thwarted at almost every turn since he had driven her soldiers out of Toulon. Now, too,

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he arranged his dependencies and allies in a commercial coalition against her. No English ships were to enter Continental ports. Down, down went shipments and sales; loud fumed the orators, editors, and bishops. But English ships still ranged the seven seas, and on these he was still unlucky.

In the carving of the European fowl his family did not fare so badly. Louis was made king of Holland and departed thither to live not so amiably with the flaxen-haired Hortense, who simply would not put up with his neglect and misanthropy.

And to Joseph, Napoleon wrote that he would make him king of Sicily and Naples, *provided* he would not dilly-dally as usual and would make up his mind quickly.

“Look at me,” ran this brotherly letter. “The recent campaigns have made me fat. The more kings that fight against me the more ridiculous will my stomach become. But I do not loaf in idleness. . . .

“You have heard my words. I can no longer have my kin in obscurity. He who will not rise with me is no longer of my family. I am making a family of kings attached to my federative system.”

All of which Joseph took, with a sigh, then entered the post-chaise for Naples.

Meantime the little sailor boy Jerome, who had lectured him on his naval policy, was led unwillingly to the altar, poor Mistress Betsy of Baltimore having been repudiated as a nobody. The second bride, the Princess Katerina of Würtemberg, came to Paris for a visit, but pleased neither him nor the Parisians. For she arrived with so hearty an appetite that she disdained the bath

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which M. de Bausset, prefect of the palace, had made ready for her. “Bathe? Hein! No, I would much rather eat.”

Nevertheless the little sailor boy espoused her and was recompensed with the kingdom of Westphalia.

Meantime Caroline and her husband, the plumed Joachim Murat, had a leg, the grand duchies of Berg and Cleves between them; the well poised Eliza, another leg and a wishbone, the grand duchy of Tuscany and the principalities of Lucca and Piombino; but Pauline, already Princess Borghese, through marriage, got only a little jumping-off place. This was but dark meat, she cried, her pretty mouth pouting; and she did *so* like light.

At this Napoleon grew somewhat vexed. Said he: “*Parbleu!* What do these ladies want? To hear their clamor one would think we were sharing the inheritance of the late king our father.” So, having exploded, he gave Pauline her light meat in the shape of the rather rich duchy of Guastalla.

And giblets with high-sounding names went the rounds of his marshals and ministers. At the touch of the imperial wand, Berthier, chief of staff, became Prince of Neufchâtel; Bernadotte, of Ponte Corvo; Talleyrand, of Benevento. And presto! Messieurs les Généraux Lannes, Masséna, Duroc, Davoust, Junot, Ney, and Soult were dukes of Montebello, Frioul, Auerstädt, Abrantes, Elchingen, and Dalmatia respectively; and a little later Suchet, Oudinot, Marmont, Mortier, and Victor were all transformed into “Your Graces.” Davoust, Berthier, Masséna, and Ney did not stop there, soon becoming princes of Eckmühl, Wagram, Essling, and Moskwa—again respectively; all the chancellors and treasurers of

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state had titles; and Eugène became in turn Duke of Leuchtenberg, Prince of Eichstädt, of Venice, and viceroy of Italy. Even Fouché was hailed as the Duke of Otranto.

By this distribution of prizes often a double purpose was served. Each marshal was thus made immortal with the field on which he had won his spurs; and since these victories were also Napoleon's, the emperor was inextricably linked up with his battles and marshals. They were so many gaily caparisoned steeds which he could drive like a multiple tandem down his boulevards of glory. Nor did it hurt in Paris. Each Frenchman felt that he shone in a sort of reflected luster.

So only Lucien remained unblessed, back in Rome, with his mother, who, Napoleon thought, had scorned him, and who sat by her window calculating her securities against that rainy day when her world-bestriding son would be unfortunate and perhaps have need of her again.

And as never had he distributed so many prizes and ribbons, so never had he written so many letters. Postmarks and addresses varied widely, but the burden was usually admonitory. There were, for instance:

A rebuke to Louis, on his Dutch throne—about Hortense: “I have a wife in her forties; yet from the battle-field I bid her go and dance. But you expect a girl in her twenties to live like a nun, to be always the nurse, washing the baby.”

A hint to Berthier, chief of staff: “You must give up your bachelorhood and its selfish ease. I desire that you marry and fittingly. I have some one in mind.”

Advice and a cup to Eugène in Rome: “I am sending you a cup with a portrait painted on it. It is that of a pretty princess whom, for your own interests and those

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of France, I desire you to marry. But you should see the original. A mere cup cannot do Augusta justice!"

A further admonition (after the wedding) to Eugène: "You are amiable like your sweet mother; but just because yours is not a marriage of love but of state, you neglect your bride. She is worthy and affectionate. Take her to the theater."

A recipe to Augusta herself, now in a delicate condition: "Take care of yourself, but do not give us a girl. I have a recipe. You will laugh at it as absurd; nevertheless it is often effective. It is that you take a little sip of wine each day."

Now a sharper reprimand to Louis, for distributing orders, with Louis's portrait on them, to everybody in France: "What have you accomplished to deserve that men should wear your portrait over their hearts?"

Another to Junot, mad governor of Paris, who loved bizarre effects: "Stop writing to me on that mourning paper. It has a sinister look. No one is yet dead in your family, though your wife will have need of it, if you persist in writing so to me."

An order to a *notaire*, about that troublesome case of Mistress Betsy of Baltimore (Jerome's first wife): "I have read miss [*sic!*] Patterson's letter. I will see her child with pleasure, and will take charge of it, if she will send it to France. As for herself, she can have anything she wants; but for political reasons I cannot recognize her. Deal with the matter with sympathy and good taste."

A lesson for Joseph: "I do not like your decree issued from Naples on monasteries. In matters that touch religion the wording should be in terms of religion, not in those of philosophy. That is the great art of the ruler,

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which the man of letters does not possess—to give to each edict the character, flavor, and phraseology of the calling involved."

And the tartest of rebukes to the little sailor boy, now turned king and rake: "I have run across an order of the day issued by you that makes you the laughing-stock of Europe. Have you no friend who will tell you the truth? You must be a soldier, again a soldier, always a soldier. You must get up at two in the morning, bivouac with your outposts, spend day and night in the saddle, march with your advance-guard. But you wage war like a satrap. By heavens! is it from me that you have learned that? From me who with my army of three hundred thousand live with my skirmishers?" Now he tries to soften it: "You have much ambition, some intelligence, a few good qualities"—it was no use, so—"but these are spoiled by sullenness and great presumption; and you have no real knowledge." And he ends in a burst of wrath, "In God's name keep enough wits about you to write and speak with propriety!"

Altogether his family caused him more trouble than the rest of Europe; and in the family zodiac his sun did not shine so brightly as in Continental skies. But there it did indeed ride high, and only Letizia saw the sunset, as more and more he came to rely on his mastery of men. "Force, force," he would say, "is all that can compel them. But what does it matter, since I bring them good laws, wealth, and security? That is the only practical substitute for freedom."

So almost imperceptibly the old days of the dreams of liberty in a glorious and pristine purity were left far behind. Seldom now did he refer to Plutarch's men;

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fewer there were each year that he trusted, greater the number he classed as “bought.”

“The mass of mankind are fitted to be, not serfs but servants. It is a mistake to unbend too much, to treat them with too familiar a kindness. Give them their due, a few ribbons; protect them and pay them suitable wages. But make them earn them.”

For preëminently he was fitted to be master and he knew it. But he did not ask himself what might happen to this glorious structure he had built up. He was no student of Shakspere; Ossian’s martial lines pleased him better; and he did not look on that structure as any “unsubstantial pageant that would some day fade and leave not a wrack behind.” It had occurred to him, of course, hence his feverish search for an heir, as though with his name he could leave behind the ability to carry on so mighty a business—but as these years crowded each other into history deliberately he made himself blind. The Future would not bear scrutiny.

CHAPTER XXVI

Also a Polish Lady

SO with undaunted courage and unflagging zeal he drove on, and in time came to Warsaw, ancient capital and heart of bleeding Poland. Here his eye was captured by a certain lady of the city whom he observed at a ball. She was blue-eyed, and her brow was nobly molded. She had, too, a love of country and a very old husband.

That very morning—of the ball—he had written to Josephine, “You exaggerate the beauties of the ladies of Poland.” Nevertheless he sent for the blue-eyed countess, by Duroc. For love of country, hate of an ancient husband, hesitating a little, she came.

At the door Duroc discreetly vanished; from his chair the emperor jumped up, greeted her almost effusively, begged her to remove the veil which shrouded the beautiful eyes.

With modesty she demurred; then playfully he himself drew it aside, led her to a chair, and rang the bell-rope. As once for a Prussian lady, so now for a Polish, attendants brought crimson and purple fruits in baskets of silver, wine foaming in golden goblets. The candles, too, twinkled quite as gaily; and her purely molded features were reflected in the silver.

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For a while they conversed, she looking, not at him, but around the room. Nor was it mock shyness. One's will may have been forged to the cold steel of sacrifice, but that does not prevent the heart from beating wildly.

Then gradually her eyes sought his. Ah! It was not so *difficile*. Here was no ogre. Those eyes had charm. Like Josephine, she found in that stern mouth the cupid's bow.

Soon they fell to conversing of her country. Forgetting herself, she leaned forward, her elbows on the fine napery, among the goblets and silver baskets, her own wine almost untouched. As she pleaded for "bleeding Poland," her eyes seemed frosted with mists like the chasing on the silver. As for him, he felt that intoxication which beauty, particularly beauty in distress, that may be pitied and also later may yield, can bring.

The hour passed. She drew the veil.

"I must go," she said.

"But you will come again," he pleaded. "Tell me that you will come."

"If—" she faltered—"you will promise to think of my country."

He promised; she rose, gave him her hand, not her cheek. But that he kissed; and she left, much happier than the lady from Prussia. It is indeed a fortunate hour when the exaltation of a noble sacrifice can be accompanied by such pleasant perturbation—perturbation not at all occasioned by fright.

That night the conqueror fell asleep with dreams of delight, and next morning took quill in hand to write to Josephine.

Now, he had written her some days before: "I love you and want you badly. Good-by, dear friend." But Jose-

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phine's conduct at this juncture was puzzling. For some years she had taken few chances with their relationship. In Munich and Mainz, however, she had found dancing so delightful that she was lulled into a false security. She intended to come but would delay a little. And within the fortnight he again upbraided her: "I have not heard a word from you since you left Strasbourg. That is not very nice, very loving."

So! he had wanted her and she would not come. *Eh bien!* he might find the affection he craved here in Warsaw. Wherefore this morning he wrote: "After all, it is a great distance from Mainz to Warsaw. I am inclined to think that you had better proceed to Paris."

And the very same quill indited this, the moment after, to the countess:

I see only you; I adore only you. A quick answer will calm the impatient ardor of

N.

And at last Josephine, who had not wanted to come when he begged her, now that he did not want her, insisted on coming. At once Napoleon grew very considerate: "The hardship of the journey is too great." Next day, he grew peremptory. "It is out of the question that I should allow you to take such a journey."

Meantime the blue-eyed countess had received the note, glanced at the "N" scrawled like a drowned fly doubling back on itself, and hesitated. Even with a husband so ancient and complaisant, yielding was hard after twenty-five years of untouched innocence. Then she thought of Poland, bleeding Poland and dark-blue eyes—compelling

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eyes. Yes, she would answer it, but after a while. Her womanhood demanded at least a few days of grace. Besides, she must not hold herself too cheap.

So, after more letters—ringing true but not quite so true as those that went up from Milan by spurred horses so long ago—he drew the hangings once more, had the table set with the gold plate, the candles lighted. . . . Later he snuffed the candles.

“For my country,” the blue-eyed countess tried to say to herself, trembling a little; but now the slogan was not so convincing. Still, she was happy—both for herself and him. And there was a real pleasure in giving, since he seemed so to need affection, he the first man in all the world.

The brief honeymoon, left-hand, passed; and he sought refuge in work which had not, even in these hours of delight, been much interrupted. In the affair which, despite all the lackeys and gossips, had been one of his very few serious ones, he had found passion, disquiet, and a little of content. The passion had soon paled, for even an emperor may be foiled in his search for romance; but he was surprised and annoyed that he could not recapture Youth’s first ardor. Those days of the feverish Italian letters were not to come again. Still he was pleased with the calm affection that seemed on both sides to follow the first hours, and which, he consoled himself, would not die. And, after all, one’s real solace, if one be so indefatigably industrious, lies in work—work, down to the end.

As for the blue-eyed Countess Walewska, she, too, had to be content with the same calm affection. She had won, Poland lost. He really would have liked to help her coun-

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try; indeed that thought had been much in his mind. But the interests of France were his first duty; and one could not offend his new allies by forcing them to give all their conquests back. Still, toward the partial rehabilitation of Poland he could carve out a grand duchy of Warsaw, with a not inconsiderable domain.

This he did. So, after all, since he loved her, she came off with more than a rose.

CHAPTER XXVII

More Family Matters

HE was still worried about Lucien, and his concern came not alone from self-interest but from genuine affection, a deep sense of family solidarity and of the fitness of things. It did not seem right that Lucien, gifted though pig-headed, should remain ignobly on the earth while he himself soared so high. Besides, he needed an able lieutenant. So he determined to go to Italy to see him.

On the way he stopped in Paris long enough to make a few new needed laws and lecture Junot, who was now mad enough to renew his attentions to his old flame, Pauline. Madame Junot, the little Laurette, now Duchesse d' Abrantes, was *enceinte*, and an ardent soldier needed relaxation to bear up under the sight of his wife's travail. The flirtation may have served as relaxation for Madame Junot too, for later she impersonated with much amusement her husband in his heroics. At any rate, Napoleon was not amused when he confronted this **Don Juan** in jack-boots.

"Why does the princess occupy your box at the theater? Why does the princess publicly ride in your carriage? Why is your carriage seen at two in the morning in her courtyard? Ah! Your Grace is surprised that I should know of your movements. I know everything.

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My eye sees all. But I did not think to see you compromise my sister!"

He paused, actually perplexed, as though by the conduct of a naughty child.

"I love Pauline; she is a delightful minx, but she should not let the minx cross the line and become the little fool. She is that, and you are a big one, Monsieur the Governor of Paris!"

Then fondly and mournfully he ran his fingers through the tall hero's hair.

"Promise me to be more reasonable, crazy-head. Come, you will—will you not?"

And, tears in his eyes, the heroic philanderer made vows of eternal fealty and rectitude, which, of course, he did not keep.

If the taint of megalomania had touched the crowd, their chief was not so much affected as those who rode with him. And now there was far deeper cause for worry—about the Murats, Caroline and her Joachim, the Grand Duke of Cleves and Berg, also of twenty-four thousand francs' worth of plumes. The pair, so Savary pretty well proved, had been forming cabals. What the object was, no one knew, but it was whispered that when Napoleon was afield Joachim would seize Rome from Eugène or, better still, make a dash for Paris and occupy that throne. Talleyrand and Fouché were, it was further rumored, mixed up in this plot, though those two cronies were too sagacious for so wild a scheme and probably intended but to make a fool out of Murat. There was nothing they liked better than making fools out of people, and thus discrediting them, unless it was setting good friends at odds with each other.

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Napoleon, however, deliberately thrust all these reports aside. Busybodies had already worked enough harm with his ministers and marshals.

“Murat, the brave, the invincible! He whom I have brought up with me, set his teeth in this hand!” He laughed incredulously. “I will not believe it.”

It was significant perhaps that he used that “will not” rather than “cannot.” And all he said to Caroline, the handsome forceful Caroline with the sneer in the corner of her mouth, was: “To what I have heard whispered I will not attach any importance. No Bonaparte could be so treacherous to the family and to me, its protector. But watch your plumed Joachim. He is brave in the field, but a numskull in politics; as easily led there as he is with difficulty swerved when mounted for the charge.”

Having uttered this, he looked at her, thought to kiss her, then changed his mind.

The following day he posted down to Mantua, the rendezvous appointed in his letter sent to Lucien in Rome.

Lucien was of two minds about going, had in fact almost decided to stay, when his mother, trembling under her austere calm, begged him to heed the letter. She was weary of all this internecine strife, longed for reconciliation. Lucien, however, still procrastinated, and now her voice did not tremble as she told him peremptorily, “There is but one thing to do, Lucien—go!” and he, though he knew it not, being still tied to the Ramolino apron-strings, went.

Before the appointed palace in Mantua, however, he saved his face by saying to his cousin who had come with him:

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“Do not put up the horses. I shall be out in five minutes.”

Upstairs he found his brother in a mellow twilight of oil paintings, engaged in deep conversation with Murat, Duroc, and Prince Eugène. Hearing his step, Napoleon turned and came forward with outstretched hands.

“Ah! Lucien, dear brother,” he said; and there was in his tones not an echo of the old quarrels.

Lucien accepted the embrace a trifle offishly at first, but melted a little as he felt the other’s pressure. So for a moment they stood, hands still clasped, as Napoleon surveyed and tried to read the other: still the same handsome Greek-coin profile, but glasses now, and near-sighted from reading old books. Hm-m—astigmatic in more ways than one, and weak of leg! He shrugged a mental shoulder. “Ideologue, dreamer still; what a ruin! But I shall yet save him!”

Meanwhile Lucien was thinking, “Has the fat too gone to his brain?” utterly ignoring the fine clarity of the gaze bent upon him. Then he released himself and stood uncomfortably and stiffly, that fine profile askew, those spindle-shanks far apart.

“Well, Lucien,” said the emperor at last, “what have you in mind? What are your plans? Will you go hand in hand with me?”

“I form no projects,” said the other gloomily. “As for the ‘hand in hand,’ what does that commit me to?”

On the table near them, among illuminated missals and daggers, lay a more practical-looking chart. Throwing this open with one of his graceful gestures, the emperor declared:

More Family Matters

“Chose any corner you please. It shall be my dear brother’s.”

The near-sighted eyes wavered, but the body maintained its obstinate attitude. The emperor looked astonished, but his voice went on, winning, almost sweet.

“Do you not understand what I offer? That you share with me the rule of the world? Louis is a fool, Jerome a child. I must carry them and my sisters and their husbands—the whole pack. Only Joseph and you, chiefly you, Lucien, can serve me. Yet to carry out my plans and continue to do what I can for my family, I must have my family behind me. Come, brother, am I not generous enough?”

Sternly Lucien’s answer came back:

“I am the same and my principles are the same as at Brumaire. It is you who have changed.”

“Why, that is absurd! I give the people all the liberty they are ready for. As youths, we were unpractical, thought we could fit our gossamer caps of theory to hard-headed facts. Would you wish the Revolution back? Sometimes I believe you would, so that you might palaver and orate, instead of accomplishing real things such as are done under my system. Come, come, stiffen up your dreams, Lucien, by putting a practical foundation under them.”

Rapidly the sentences succeeded each other; then he paused, to go on placatingly: “But here I talk things political, when the trouble is purely personal. I know what is the matter. Your wife. We quarreled over her. We quarreled, but we shall make up. I shall recognize her at once—publish an edict this afternoon, if you travel with me. For my offense I ask your forgiveness, and offer my entire love and friendship, dear brother.”

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At these tones of persuasion, with overtones of genuine affection, Lucien was moved, but steadied himself to a gesture of dissent.

“I will never be your prefect. If I rule any kingdom I shall rule according to my principles.”

“Principles! Foolish notions, you mean,” returned Napoleon, then bit his lips, striving hard to master his irritation. “But why then did you come? In your heart of hearts, Lucien, you think no more of those principles than I. They are but banners by which you mean to attract attention to yourself. What you want is an absolute equality with me, I who have worked while you pored over books. Yet this equality now I offer you.”

As the other made no reply he turned and paced the floor, muttering, “Always the same, always the same!” Then he turned to face the stubborn brother, who shrank not an inch.

“But once more, why did you come to meet me? Will these quarrels between flesh and blood never cease? You ought to obey me as the head and father of the family.”

And now Lucien lost his temper.

“Go back to your serfs. I am not one. You shall not rule *me!*”

The three observers, who had withdrawn a little down the long gallery, caught the defiance and awaited an outburst similar to those they knew so well. And for a second wrath flared in Napoleon’s face, like the candle on the table which had burned down to the socket; then he snuffed that wrath, quite as the attendant, bringing a fresh candle, put out the sputtering flame. Here was another battle he was determined to win; and resolutely he brought to his features a look of good-will.

More Family Matters

“Night often brings good counsel, Lucien,” he said. “These cobwebs of yours will vanish in the bright daylight. Think over what I have said, and you will become reassured as to the interests of Europe, if not of your own. Good night, my dear brother.”

This affectionate farewell the temperamental Lucien could scarcely stand. As he shook his brother’s hand, the near-sighted eyes became so misted that he groped for the door. Napoleon placed a hand on his elbow, but the other shook it off, and rigidly made his bow and exit.

“Till to-morrow,” Napoleon called after him blithely; but the stubborn Lucien acted according to his lights; and they were not to see each other again until it was too late. All the next day Napoleon waited, then rode sorrowfully, but none the less swiftly, north.

Letizia was the only one who got anything out of the trip. For it suddenly occurred to Napoleon that his conduct toward her had been somewhat remiss, that he had let his indignation at her support of Lucien get the better of him. So, once back in Paris, he decreed that she should be called Madame Mère, or Empress Mother; gave her a suite of ladies in waiting, among them their old friend Laurette Junot, *née* Permon; and added to her income a stipend of two hundred thousand francs per year. And Letizia, though she cared more for the francs than the honors, accepted all. It was, to be sure, nothing less than seemly; he had acted like a little boy; and she *had* thought he might have done it before.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Napoleon Faces a Crisis

HOW much Lucien's refusal hurt his brother only Napoleon ever knew. He needed able assistants badly; and he had gone far in pocketing his pride. Some said he was like Shylock, ruing the junior partner lost rather than the excellent brother. But most human actions have more motives than one; and his affections were injured as well as his good business sense and pride. He had wanted to help Lucien, he told himself, as much as to secure Lucien's help; and Lucien, more through vanity and pique than any ardent republicanism, had stood in his own and his brother's light.

His affections, however, were not hurt so much as they once might have been. One grows callous with the years, as one's business engrosses him, particularly if he has started a vast something he cannot stop. It is a phase not far from the last when an indefatigable industry will at last know fatigue and simply go through the motions. And there was none to pity him except his mother, who saw so little of him and must keep her counsel. But then who can pity the man astride the world? The conqueror with his hand against every man's does not seem nearly so pathetic a figure as the shabby *sous-lieutenant* climbing up.

So he rode on—to the west this time, where his fences

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were down—feeling strangely disillusioned. He did not pause to consider whether others too might not be aggrieved; simply drew the farther within himself, farther even than when first rebuffed by his bride.

The trouble was in Spain. She had been his ally as long as he brought a more persuasive pressure to bear than England, but had wavered when he had been so busily engaged—at Jena and Friedland to the east. And now the British lion, shut out from the rest of Europe, was threatening to gobble his Hispanic sheep.

Still, it was better not to appear on the scene in person, but to work through Junot and Murat, such lieutenants as he had, now that his brother had failed him; so he put up at Bayonne, in a house by the sea, in the very shadow of the Pyrenees. From here horses could gallop, three a day, over the hills, with instructions to his troops, which were not far from Madrid. How long they would stay there he did not know. He had signed a treaty with Manuel Godoy, favorite of the king of Spain, lover of the queen, for a joint expedition into Portugal, the one ally England had left on the mainland of Europe. They had driven the English into the sea, the Portuguese rulers to Brazil; but immediately the Spanish heir, Ferdinand, had revolted against Godoy and his parents, and Spain was torn into two factions. However, his troops were on the spot, and it is always convenient to have an army on the spot.

Josephine, in this house by the sea, the Château de Merrac, saw a little more of her husband. She was glad of that, though scarcely reassured, there had been so much divorce gossip from ladies' maids and so many alarming reports from Fouché. And she did not like this

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business of Spain. She would have much preferred enjoying one throne in security to contriving for others. And not altogether understanding her lord's business, she did not agree with him, that to maintain the one he must acquire all the others.

She had been there a fortnight when, one April noon, he dined with herself, Hortense, Berthier, and her two kinswomen, M^{es} de Beauharnais and de Tascher. A window near-by afforded an admirable view of the three groups of roofs and towers into which the Nive and Adour rivers split Bayonne, also of the blue mountains beyond which lay the much-needed Spain. Suddenly he jumped up, went to this window, but not to enjoy the view.

“It is the impossible,” she heard him exclaim. “They have come—right into the net!”

And swiftly she joined him, to see in the courtyard a seventeenth-century coach disgorge the tall king of Spain; servants following with his violin-case and fowling-pieces; the queen in a wig and hoops; and her lover, the prime minister, a veritable bullock of a man, with orders strewn across his chest like the colorful rows of a Neapolitan wash-line, also with hay-seeds still sticking in his hair from the hay-loft into which he had been chased by Prince Ferdinand.

Napoleon hurried down the grand staircase, out to the coach, and, playing the spider too well, she feared, welcomed them right into his parlor. And later that same day, over a path they could almost pick out threading those hills, the rebellious prince too had come riding into the courtyard and the parlor. When he ran into his father there had been words so violent and unseemly even to those who remembered Barras's salons that she and her

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ladies must needs clap hands to their ears. And Napoleon and Berthier had to separate them, leading the king off to one wing, the prince to another, their meals being served separately. To the detached the whole proceedings might seem amusing; to Josephine, once she had stifled her mirth, they caused genuine concern. She had long since got past any idea of dissuading her husband from his wild schemes, but there must be some line of conduct he expected her to follow. She wanted to know what to do with these four goldfish of his. So, as they snored below, she tapped at his door.

She had always been so sweetly sure of herself. Grace of movement and manner, her sunny spirit, all in accord, when she entered a room she filled it with harmony. She was not unaware of this charm; but now she stood timidly on the threshold. Her husband, as time went on, was growing so oblivious of her—of everything, in fact, except his detested business. And he had not been the same man since his interview with Lucien. What had occurred there she did not know, except that Lucien had refused something. But she could imagine the emperor hectoring, laying down the law, suddenly softening it all perhaps with his impulsive charm; and though Lucien, with all the Bonapartes, had been her foe, for once she had a fellow-feeling for him.

At last Napoleon looked up from his papers—the pen so rapidly scratching. “Ah! my little Josephine!” How patronizing it sounded to-night! Still, she went over to him, touching his arm with her fingers outstretched as though wooing music from a harpsichord. Perhaps the movement suggested that she might after all attune his mood to hers, for she began softly:

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“Once you credited me with good sense. If only you would now and let these people go back!”

His calm under her attentions had misled her. Recoiling, he said sharply:

“Have I jailed them? Who put such notions into your head?”

“Every one talks of it, laughs about it; and, my love, I know your finesse.”

“‘Finesse! *Quelle sottise!* Soon you, like the English, will credit me with a cleverness I do not possess. I did not ask them. They came of their own accord.”

She smiled ruefully, though she took care not to let him see her smile. He might not have actually kidnapped them, she thought, but she would have liked to see the letters leading up to this “visit.” Then she returned to the attack with a spirit that surprised her after the trepidation with which she had entered the room.

“There is one thing I must warn you about, Napoleon, since no one else will be so frank. I have heard it on all sides. It is that the Spanish people are proud. They”—mischief prompted her to finish—“do not like to have you play papa to Spain.”

But he had deserted her, and she went on more meekly to him at the other end of the room:

“Forgive me. I see it is no use. Very well—now that your goldfish are here, what do you want me to do with them?”

He brightened.

“Ah, that is better! my beloved little Josephine again in her true self.” She almost writhed. Ah, men, men, men! “The one who helped me at Brumaire by breakfasting Bernadotte and all my sulky generals. You see, I have

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not forgotten. Now you can do the same. The royal party are all at odds with each other. Keep them happy so that they forget their rancor. The king loves hunting and Haydn; listen to him play the fiddle—I could not stand it—and talk to him of peregrine falcons. The prince desires to marry one of our nieces; he will not, but it will do no harm to give him a little hope. As for the queen, she loves to play *à la Catharine*, must see her Godoy every hour. Above all, sing to them, chatter to them of—”

“Ah! that was the game—so—“Of Paris and France,” she broke in. “I think I understand. The fashions, fêtes, the ideal life in our country châteaux, so that they may be happy when they are translated there.”

He looked at her with mingled admiration and irritation.

“Exactly. You have guessed it. I should not have thought to give you directions. I can always rely on your exquisite tact. No plans are yet made. But they are unfit to rule, and I must prepare for eventualities.”

So, still meek, for all her recent show of spirit, she retired with a manner that said, “As my lord wills.” But the gallantry with which he led her to the door did not deceive her. Why should he treat her more and more as the child, less as the beloved companion? Once it had not been so. No—superlative he might be in all that touched the state, but in family matters he was no more successful than any Jacques of the Halles, too engrossed with cabbages and haricots to treat his wife as more than some one to wait behind the counter. Her own earlier indifference she had quite overlooked, for, despite little innocent sorties at Strasbourg, one gains a new sense of values with the years. Now she valued her man; and, like the

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Fourès in Egypt, recognized her rival for what she was—not woman or women, but one far more dangerous. Call it Fame or Work; it made no difference. The door closed with a sigh.

And now, his gentle Josephine gone, Napoleon lost his unconcerned look. Despite all his protestations, he knew he faced a crisis, that a misstep would be fatal. That was the trouble with all this king business: one must ever step as though walking on diplomatic eggs, never rest. All was forever being begun, nothing ended; though, while it lasted, it was interesting enough.

Throwing himself on the ottoman, hands clasped behind his head, one foot on the other—a scarcely imperial but characteristic pose—he ran over the situation, which he had not thought it worth while to explain to his wife.

He had concluded, some months before, that treaty through this queen-lover Godoy, by which the French and Spanish jointly entered Portugal. They had succeeded, foiled the English; his troops had returned near Madrid. So far, so good!

And the royal family was impossible. Good again! The king loved his fiddle and fowling-pieces, not his kingdom; the queen loved glory and Godoy; the prince, only himself; and the Spanish, none of them, though they favored the prince as the best of a bad lot.

Also the prince had rebelled against his parents, driven them out of the palace, Godoy into the hay-loft. Since no one knew whether Charles or Godoy was his father, this revolt was in either event an unnatural crime—and very favorable for Napoleon. For here you had a cuckold king; a light-o'-love queen; a fratricidal son; perhaps,

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too, a bastard, therefore illegitimate, in the royal family; also a pander for prime minister; a misgoverned country as badly in need of reorganization as he in need of that country; and the great reorganizer at hand just over the mountains.

It was all quite like a burlesque. That did not entirely escape his notice or his sense of humor. But the day was long since past for humor. And, as at Brumaire, farces as often as heroic dramas could serve his purpose.

The difficulty was to get Spain and the world to see the need of the reorganization. Spaniards were sensitive, might resent being done all this good by an outsider; indeed they already showed signs of pique at his paternal presence just over the mountains. This objection, however, he dismissed as of small account.

The world's opinion caused him deeper concern. With such a crew fighting over the Spanish saddle, and with his own record behind him, the benefits of intervention, he thought, should be evident to all. But England would think for the world, and, of course, would not think his way. Then the cry of "usurper" would again be raised. Too much reiteration of that would destroy morale, injure him irreparably in the eyes of the Rhineland, Italy, and many other states to which he might have given a pseudo-liberty but many very real and progressive institutions.

It was true, though, that taking the crown, or intervention even, might be construed as an offense against the law of nations. That he would admit. But it was a case of the real security and power he could give to Spain against a figment of independence. A concrete good against an abstract wrong! If only the world and history could be per-

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suaded of that. Casuistry was a useful weapon; and blundering England had taught him new tricks—though this by no means was all casuistry.

Now as he deliberated, he rose from the ottoman and paced between the windows. Through one he could see the Pyrenees purple in the moonlight—beautiful but barriers to his castles in Spain. Out at sea the moon made a path; on it late fishermen were casting their nets, quite as he was casting his. Below him, to the west, billows dashed against a breakwater as the wrath of England against his legions, an onset that, like the tides, would not cease so long as he should stand.

Ordinarily, poetical figures did not interest him *per se*, save as they served for bulletin or speech; but these to-night were quite apropos. Certainly he had been very wary in casting his nets so as to avoid reproach.

To Murat he had written “on no account to attack the Spanish people”; and later had upbraided him for “taking such hasty steps as your recent making of yourself master of Madrid. You should have stayed near enough the capital but leagues away. Nothing should be hurried forward; we should take counsel of events as they occur. Manage so that the Spaniards have no suspicion of what I plan. Indeed I do not yet know myself.”

He had also complimented the vain Murat by soliciting his opinion and by telling him all about those benefits.

“I can, consistently with the interests of my empire, do a great deal of good for Spain. What do you think are the best means to be adopted? Shall I go to Madrid, take on the office of grand protector, decide between father and son? Ferdinand is unfit to be king; and it is

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almost impossible to support Charles, his government and the queen's lover are so unpopular.

"But," he had added, "pay respects to them"—that is, to the old king and queen; "and meantime assure the clergy that in case of my intervention I shall respect all their privileges. Make them see that the emperor desires to improve the political conditions of Spain, to put her on a footing with the most advanced states of Europe.

"Tell all local magistrates and people of culture that Spain stands in need of system and organization. At the same time call their attention to the state of France, rich and powerful in spite of all her wars.

"Thus pave the way adroitly for my intervention; and have routes ready for my armies. But let there be no trouble between your troops and the Spanish. *There must be no flash in the pan.*"

Of course, he had to make some personal inquiries about the health of brother-in-law Joachim:

"I note with pleasure that the baths have been beneficial to your health." Sometimes he wished they would drown the fellow, this "hero and ass"; but this was more to the point: "Do not think of your own interests. I shall look out for them for you."

Those rumors of Murat's and Caroline's conspiracies had been increasingly frequent of late. It might be a mistake not to exile him, yet, in lieu of gifted brothers, he must continue to use him. Wherefore Joachim must be completely reassured about his own prospects, possibly given a throne, before he turn outright traitor.

But bad as was Joachim's alleged treachery, his blunders were worse. If only an emperor could multiply himself a few times, be in more places! One may lay down

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general policies; but one cannot, at a distance, provide for heroic asses courses of action for all the contingencies that may arise.

All this had been written a fortnight ago. Since, he had moved more warily than ever; had played both ends; answered the usurping Prince Ferdinand's letter, asking for one of his nieces in marriage, with every encouragement but without any committal; and avoided recognition of his claim to the usurped throne by never once addressing him as a brother monarch. Had he done so, Ferdinand would have shown that letter all over Europe. Meantime he had corresponded at length with the evicted king and queen as though they were still possessed of full authority. So far he had been consistent.

And he had never been point-blank or offensively obtrusive in his communications; merely by tactful suggestion tendered his good offices. He had not thought of kidnapping them. Like the fish out there in the moonlight, they had swum into his seine.

Thus, hours after his gentle Josephine had departed, the emperor faced the moon-path and his crisis. Whatever his foes might say, he was not, so he assured himself, either "insensate" or blind. He was keenly alive to the danger lurking in the problem—of that abstract wrong against a very concrete good.

And he could not stop now. He must consolidate his farm of Europe, complete his system, shut England forever out. There could be no half-measures. If he hesitated, let England in, they would go on warring forever. And now the situation was made to hand. A little cajolery, a few gifts of money and châteaux, and, *voilà!* those gold-fish below would turn over the crown to himself and

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France. Success was at last in sight! And the fulfilment of that dream when, wars over, the world would flourish under his beneficent rule— But there was a knock at the door—Fate in the person of the sly Savary, now Duke of Rovigo, who in indefatigable industry tried to ape his master.

“A letter, sire, secured from the postmistress on the border, written by the Prince of the Asturias” (Ferdinand) “and quite suspicious.”

Napoleon took it, glanced at it.

“You call it suspicious; yet it is in Spanish, which you do not read with any accuracy. Call the prefect. He speaks the language like a native.”

The prefect of the palace, entering, was handed the missive, read the superscription—to one of Ferdinand’s ministers in Madrid—and paragraphs all innocuous enough until he came to the final one: “Govern well and do not let the accursed French betray thee.”

“‘Accursed French?’ And he a guest under my own roof!” However, the expression on Napoleon’s face was one of pleasure rather than anger. Here was proof positive of the prince’s duplicity. Now the world might see the necessity of Spain. But he must make sure.

“Have you translated that literally?”

“See for yourself, sire—there—‘malditos.’ ”

“Ah! It is quite like the Italian; from the same root. You are right. That is all, M. de Bausset.”

So Fate, in the person of sly Savary, bearing a purloined letter, decided his destiny. His mind had almost been made up and, though he was not superstitious, needed but this one little sign. Once more he would risk all on a throw.

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The decision made, he threw himself on the bed. The moon, now low in the west, cast its bright trail over the coverlids and his relaxed features. It might have been thought symbolic of dreams of glory. But there were no dreams. His body was still fairly sound; sound was his sleep; and so, in most respects, seemed his plans.

CHAPTER XXIX

Josephine Gives a Dinner-Party and Lends Her Hair-Dresser to the Queen of Spain

FOR several days Josephine listened dutifully to the king's Haydn, charmed the prince out of his sulks, saw to it that the queen had ample opportunity for rendezvous with her Godoy, and regaled them all with tales of the delightful life in France. The grand dinner, too, came off well.

She did not entirely trust to the officers of her *ménage* but, an hour before the descent of her guests, inspected the preparations: the potted plants and little lemon-trees in boxes; the colored lights on the grand staircase and in the cornices; the table laid for 104 covers; the profusion of early yellow roses, festoons of sweet-scented syringa and orange and almond blossoms; the long rows of tall goblets and heavy gold plate, with N's engraved on them—everywhere, from crystal, silver, and gold, shone those N's; and finally the squadrons of knee-breeched, silk-stockinged servitors.

She had also arranged for little gold-chased snuff-boxes with cunningly contrived springs that opened when one touched the engraved N's; and, in these, verses apropos of their Spanish Majesties, written by Isabey, the court

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painter, were concealed. The touch occasioned no little favorable comment.

The guests, too, she carefully placed. The royalties presided at the head of the table, but those members of the old régime, the Counts d'Andosse and Reille (in silver and green, mulberry and gold, respectively) were near enough to the old king to engage him in tactful conversation. Her niece, Mlle. de Tascher and her first-second cousin-in-law, Stephanie de Beauharnais (both in virginal white tulle) sat where the match-hunting prince might gaze on them adoringly. And the ardent old queen (in English point-lace over a yellow slip, soon showing perspiration at the arm-holes) could touch ankles with the red-faced Godoy (in canary, with the orders of Christ and the Golden Fleece, Charles III and Malta, of St. Ferdinand and January).

Below the salt was a long array of beady-eyed, hawk-faced dons—the Duke l'Infantado, Pedro Callos, Canon Excoquiz, the prince's tutor. The violet-clad Isabey, Duroc, Berthier, M. de Beauharnais, another in-law, and a flock of her ladies-of-honor were sandwiched in between; also the Duchess of Montebello (Madame Lannes) and La Maréchale Lefebvre (Madame Sans Gêne), whom Josephine did not want but Napoleon insisted on having, since her husband was fighting in Spain.

For this critical dinner-party Napoleon had donned the hated silk coat with its forest of oak-leaves and laurel, all gold against the crimson; and he appeared less tense than one might expect for one facing a crisis, indeed rather jocular and urbane. Josephine herself looked lovely—so all eyes and lips told her—in white embroidered heavily in cerise with a design of cherries; a high *chérusque*, or tulle ruff, worked in silver, rising behind her chestnut

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coils; a bandeau of brilliants on her brow; also a little touch of rouge, which she had scorned for years, to hide the pallid olive.

From time to time she glanced at her husband in faint disapproval, not that his manners were at fault, for he was the acme of polished courtesy, nor that he was getting so stout that the red coat had to be let out that afternoon. Stoutness cannot matter when a man has so noble a head and is the lord of all the world. Besides, after twelve years of married life a woman does not worry so much about her husband's figure. She only asks that the spirit be harmonious. But his was not; he seemed strange, growing away from her. However, no one observed the shadows of these reflections. The glances were covertly slipped in between her radiant smiles and soft sallies to right and left.

To the king over the turbot: "You should have seen that last hunt at Fontainebleau." And so enchantingly did she describe it that one could almost hear the holloa of the horns winding through the green tapestry of Francis I's forests.

Again: "You must meet our Grétry. That last minuet of his haunts one." "Ah! yes. It goes like this, *n'est-ce pas?*" But saints! was the man going to sing, fork in hand and full of turbot, keeping time? Were these the manners of Madrid?

And now left—to the queen—over some dainty in aspic: "Your daughter looks quite like her father about the eyes, but like you, I think, in the mouth and chin—let me see." . . . Heavens! what an ill-fitting set of teeth she shows as she attacks that aspic. And a complexion like *potage des pommes!* She's worse than the washwoman

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Sans Gêne. . . . Again aloud: "What charm the princess has! You must arrange to let her visit me at Malmaison. I will show her Paris, the new styles; and there will be gorgeous fêtes this winter." . . . Then once more to herself: Why did he let me in for such a mob? It is more odious than that of the Terror. And why did her smiles appear so radiant, as every one said, when she felt them nothing but frozen grimaces? Still, she must continue to play the diplomat, to help him—but to what? More crowns or his ruin? No matter what, she must dutifully obey him. And she had heard what he had said to the queen when he escorted her in, oh, quite like the spider: "Do I walk too fast for your Majesty?" Then the queen: "It is your habit, Sire, is it not?" She was clever, that woman, when not ogling the odious Godoy. Why would women make such fools of themselves in their forties? And she might cause Napoleon trouble, for all he was so sure—there, the woman was turning to her again.

"We must still admit that Paris is the arbiter of fashions," she said. "Tell me what is going out, what coming in."

"*Eh bien.* I will try, though it is hard to keep up. White moire, for one, has quite vanished. Even silver lama is doubtful. For the unceremonious toilet, percales and muslins are favored. Though I must not let the emperor hear me say that," she added lightly. "He does not think we should favor the manufacturers of our foe, but should encourage the silk mercers of Lyons."

Now the queen was glancing enviously at her chestnut coils.

"Is that the latest mode of dressing the hair?" Brusque-

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ly: "I am afraid that mine is quite *passé*." And the arms raised to the wig revealed the stain in the yellow silk hideously.

Josephine felt faint, fortified herself with a sip of modest Chambertin. Where had the woman been, not to know that that had gone out long ago? But she must be tactful—always that exquisite tact the emperor must have from his little Josephine.

"They are, it is true, beginning to turn from *à la grecque*. Alas, it is so hard to keep up with the changes! But I have a hair-dresser, Duplan, who does marvels with my hair, when I am in a state of perfect despair." More covetous than ever looked the queen. "If you like, I will send Duplan to you. She might furnish you with an hour's amusement."

The stained silk queen was charmed, forgot all her ankle-rubbing. The prince was happy gazing at the two demoiselles; so too, the king, a little tipsy now, with his cashew nuts and cadenzas. Indeed all went merry as a marriage bell; the light chatter of hunts, muslins and percales, like little conversational waves, hid the dark undercurrents of diplomacy; and the time seemed ripe for the curtain.

It was set, in the emperor's mind, for the following morning; and again events helped him. For, just as he was shaving—a task which he always insisted on performing himself—a horse, also covered with lather, dashed into the courtyard from over the hills. In his dressing-gown he received the "express," then ordered an aide to the king's apartment to tell his Majesty that the emperor desired an interview at once in the reception salon, that the matter was urgent. He did not even allow them time

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for breakfast, but when the king appeared, followed by the panting queen, tossed over the despatch.

“See now what your son has contrived, what your assassins have done to the French, in what a state is your unhappy country!”

Which was as much as to say: Now is the time, as has so long been politely intimated, for your unhappy country to let its savior in.

Nor did the implication go over the heads of his guests. Charles turned uneasily in his seat, for his gout was troubling him; but, held by the emperor’s eye, he read the despatch. It told of a midnight uprising of the citizens of Madrid against Murat’s troopers, of gutters running red, of the capital being turned into a shambles. Having been dictated by Murat, it naturally laid the blame entirely at the native door and did not detail any of his own swaggering provocations.

With a trembling hand Charles now passed it to his consort. She did not look so very well this morning. The wig, not yet treated by Duplan, was awry; as she read the letter she bit her lips with the ill-fitting false teeth; and her *potage des pommes* complexion turned livid. Very well she knew what Napoleon meant. Almost she could see his hand reaching out to tear the crown off her wig. And since her autumnal passions could be quite torrid, she would have burst into a storm of vituperation had she not been thinking how she might save her Godoy. Without a word, she handed the letter back to the king, who sat there twisting his poor foot.

“I think,” at last he ventured timidly, “we had better send for the Prince of the Asturias.”

“Yes,” said Napoleon, “he must answer to me for

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these assassinations of my troopers, to the world for the spark that will start another war!"

Now, just before the king and queen had entered, he had ordered removed from the room all chairs but the three tall ones that stood with their backs against the wall. Thus when the prince appeared, attended by his two sly counselors, the Duke l'Infantado and Canon Excoquiz, there were places for Napoleon and the royal pair, none for him; a delicate hint that showed the usurper his place. Of such gossamer trifles are empires builded.

Confronted by the judges in the 'throne-like chairs, he was vaguely searching for something to sit in and so assert his royal prerogatives, when Napoleon's eye gave the cue to Charles. He handed the letter to his son.

"Read, read, my son"; but before Ferdinand could get farther than the salutation, the queen, red spots breaking out all over her face, and frantically groping for some means to save Godoy by assailing Ferdinand, conducted a sudden and unexpected attack—one wholly unnecessary too, and of which only a woman unbalanced by an abnormal passion could be guilty.

"Your son!" she shrilled, quivering all over from some ghastly neurosis; "your son!" Then she laughed crazily. "He is Godoy's and has no right to the throne."

The prince looked now as if he would have died for a chair to sit on; the duke and Canon Excoquiz chattered protests as insanely as the queen; and as for the poor king, one could not tell whether the assaults of gout or that on his honor hurt the more terribly. But, much as the confession, true or false, helped Napoleon, he did not welcome it. It was disgusting, and he could have won

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anyway without this card from up a crazy woman's sleeve.

"Her Majesty," he said quietly, as he signaled to Duroc to lead her from the room, "is not quite herself this morning. I cannot credit such a thing. We must forget what we have heard and treat this like any other matter of business."

Again he gave the cue to the man who had been unseated from his throne and now from his paternity; and Charles went on, more peevishly than forcefully, but well enough for Napoleon's purpose:

"Behold the results of the—" he sought support and adjectives from that glance—"of the infamous counsels that have been given you by perfidious friends and to which you have yielded with a culpable eagerness, thus forgetting the respect to your king and—hm—father. You have instigated a revolt—" another glance—ah! this was better. "Now it requires another hand than yours to extinguish it."

And the prince, dominated in turn by that presence which even in farces could be so majestic, faltered out that he had not intended to hurt his—hm—father, and to prove his affection he was ready to execute his abdication.

Though chairs had been removed, pen and paper were at hand as they always were at any of Napoleon's negotiations; and the signature was made over the two tutors' sputtering protests and without a single flourish.

Then Napoleon looked at Charles once more, and the king, smarting under the gout and his recent humiliation, deprived of the support of his queen and Godoy, and in his mind a pleasant background of châteaux and

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the holloa of horns in the forests of Fontainebleau, said wistfully:

“Ah, if only I had some quiet retreat in which to retire and end this existence, which has now become intolerable!”

“Your Majesty shall,” said Napoleon eagerly. “I shall settle on you a princely château with leagues of forest, and will take care of the prince. Godoy too will be looked out for. I could appropriate an income of, say, three million francs.” The king did not answer, looked out of the window.

“Five on you all—or seven; we will not haggle.”

“And you will promise to preserve my dominions intact?”

Napoleon never had any other intention.

“And preserve the holy Catholic religion?”

That too was easily arranged; and Charles took up the pen and signed away his millions of subjects, for fewer millions of francs, and to a conqueror—but one who, to do him bare justice, quite honestly held that he could do them some good.

Thus fell the curtain; but there was a little speech after the play. For Napoleon had heard how Talleyrand had made light of his Spanish policy, pooh-poohed it, in fact, in foreign capitals. He would make him indorse it. So he made that speech—in a letter—with instructions to Talleyrand to entertain the exiles with wine and song and some pretty actresses at Valençay and Fontainebleau. The ex-abbé could do nothing but comply. Thus, much to his spleen, he was tarred with the same stick, if tar it was. Over that there might be some argument, since this prince of whom Napoleon deprived Spain spent several

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years at Valençay entertaining those actresses and embroidering petticoats for statues of the Virgin.

And Napoleon showed that he still had his code. When the Duke l'Infantado prepared to sign the oath he did it so sullenly that Napoleon took the quill from his hand.

“Do not pish and pshaw like that; simply do not sign,” he said. “For you mean to break that oath, as I can very well see, sir. You are supposed to be a gentleman. Go and act like one. I will give you your passport so that you may go back to Spain, join your party, and fight against me like a man. That, sir, is the only course of honor.”

The crown he did not put on himself, but haled the protesting Joseph from Naples almost by the collar, and set him on the throne so forcibly that it almost jarred Joseph's coccyx.

Marshal Murat he put on the vacated throne of Naples, thinking that might satisfy Joachim and stop his intriguing.

But there was another act to this Spanish drama. For now the bells began to ring from the towers of the cathedrals in the cities, from the belfries of the little churches in all the hills and valleys. At once the people sounded their sheep-horns, and got out mattocks, pikes, and ancient firearms. Then they crowded on the walls, trooped out of the city gates, came down from the hills into the valleys, fell on the outnumbered French, harried them with English help, and in the sacred zeal of patriotism killed all stragglers and despatched the wounded. The English, meanwhile, came on in full force, penned up Lefebvre, and forced the fiery Junot and the doughty Davoust to surrender. More than ever Joseph rueful

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day when his mother gave birth to so energetic a younger brother. Now more than his nose, indeed the whole world, was for him out of joint.

And still he who might have turned this rout into triumph did not cross the mountains. He saw full well that he had made his mistake, but spent no time in regret. Russia in the east, playing fast and loose, was threatening to break from his alliance. He must exert his charm afresh on the tall personable young czar before appearing in Spain in person. Immediately he wrote Joseph:

Your communication that you have been thrown into the midst of events beyond the range of your experience and character grieves me, my dear friend. I feel the keenest pang that I cannot at such a moment be at your side and in the midst of my soldiers. Let me hear that you keep up your spirits, that you keep well and are getting used to soldiering. It is a splendid opportunity to learn the business.

Now, having tried to put iron in his brother, he galloped off over hill and plain and river to put some into the czar: and almost before Europe could cry "Jack Robinson!" he was back again, over the Pyrenees; driving the English into the sea; impounding the recalcitrant Spaniards; persuading the Spanish Junta to declare their admiration for him, their savior; and shoving Joseph firmly back into his seat.

Then—for his background was ever a shifting one—he was off to Paris, to scotch Monsieur de Talleyrand, who was showing marked ingratitude for the princely fief of Benevento which Napoleon had given him, not only by pooh-poohing those policies but by secretly corresponding with the Bourbons; giving ear to the tricky Count Metternich, the Austrian ambassador; and fur-

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ther trying to tempt that heroic ass, brother-in-law Joachim.

Napoleon did not stop even to be dusted off by Constant; but, booted and spurred, as soon as he reached the Pavillon de Flore, sent for the ex-abbé to come to the Tuileries. With such a master it was best even for the most princely diplomat in Europe to be prompt. He came at once, though taking snuff with an air, and heard a most meticulous description of himself, as the emperor backed him limping around the room.

“You are a thief, a coward, a man without honor”—ten paces. “You disbelieve in God; you have betrayed every one”—a full lap. “To you nothing is sacred; you would sell your own father.” And now in the corner: “You deserve that I should smash you like this glass; but I despise you too much to take the trouble!”

He made a slight mistake, perhaps, in using the glass simile which had served at Campo-Formio and on other occasions, for Talleyrand scorned clichés; but otherwise his minister was impressed. Still, Talleyrand was the best man in Europe at saving his face, and as he made his hasty exit and, outside the door, ran into the sly Savary running down, he pulled himself together enough to observe, “What a pity so great a man should be so ill-bred!”

And Savary began to wonder. If Talleyrand could so preserve his poise in the face of the imperial wrath, his master might not be so invincible. Possibly the tide would turn. Could there be anything better the Bourbons had to offer than his new duchy of Reggio?

With his mother, too, Napoleon had one short visit before hurrying on. She lodged now in the Hôtel Brienne,

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Lucien's old home in the rue St. Dominique, and in some style, with her ladies of honor, not so much because she relished it, but too much simplicity might reflect on the family and particularly on the generosity of her son.

He found her in her usual place, in a high-backed chair, looking something of her fifty-nine years, but very striking. Mlle. de Launey, their old Corsican visitor, was reading to her and Pauline, who played the pretty invalid on an ottoman, from which, however, she now jumped up, since even favorite sisters must do honor to imperial brothers.

He was still chafing from his interview with Talleyrand, and for an outlet or as a gentle diversion for his mother, or perhaps again from sheer perversity, plunged at once into a description of his latest battles in Spain.

“It was glorious, signora,” he said, relapsing into the old affectionate form of salutation. “I have never seen men fight better than my Polish legions. They were at the foot of a hill called Somosierra. I ordered it taken by a French commander who shall be jailed.

“‘It is impossible, sire,’ says this Piré. *Voilà!* I turn to the Polish Lancers. ‘Carry that position!’ And the brave Kozietulski: ‘Forward, trot. *Vive l'Empereur!*’

“The toll of the brave fellows was heavy. After they took the hill, Berthier galloped up and found, so he told me, one officer surviving. ‘I am dying,’ says this intrepid one. ‘But there are the guns. Tell the emperor that we took them!’

“I rode back to the remnant of the Lancers. ‘You are the bravest of the brave,’ I cried. And one and all they shouted, ‘*Ave, Cæsar!*’”

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Letizia turned in her chair, studied him anxiously; but still he was going on:

“Everything is moving on well. You should see my new conscripts. A hundred thousand. All good boys and strong.”

Basta! Officers that would not do the impossible jailed! One officer surviving! “Bravest of the brave!” “Hail, Cæsar!” When would it all end? Never—for now another hundred thousand—“all good boys and strong!” Did he look feverish? Yes, a little, and weary; but one could not call him insane. Again she cursed that spirit forged in him by his fathers, his foes that had baited him, all the troop of busybodies, spies, traitors, that as much as his ambition had got him in the toils. Could he not see? No, he would never see! She had been sorry for him before when as a little boy he had sobbed in her arms over a serious hurt, as a subaltern chafing in obscurity, again when he poured out his heart to Josephine; but never—and he at the height of his power—had she felt so sorry as now.

He must have seen the severity with which she hid the ache in her heart, and in his perversity did a most extraordinary thing, held out his hand to the grand old lady.

“Kiss the hand of your liege sovereign and benefactor!” he mischievously demanded.

Pauline jumped up from the ottoman on which she had curled up after her obeisance to her brother; crying now, “That is very naughty of your Majesty!” But she said it playfully; the incident really amused her, there was so little besides love-making that she took with any seriousness. Then she threw her arms around his neck, nuz-

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zling him with her admirable little nose and pretty soft cheek, and watching over his shoulder for the effect.

She saw it, for Letizia, drawing herself up to her full height, which always seemed much greater than it really was, augustly and without a word swept out of the room.

He turned to his sister. "Pauline, I am vexed with you too. You do nothing but lie on the sofa and exhibit your charms. You should give balls, appear in public, cheer the people up, particularly when you hear rumors of defeat." With which admonishment Napoleon, emperor and sulky boy, left the hôtel.

Outside, he said in a hurt tone to Duroc, who had witnessed the scene: "My mother is like all the rest; she too misunderstands me. Could she not see it was all a jest?" Then suddenly he stumbled as he was getting into the carriage, and placed his hand under his heart.

"The old trouble," he said. "Corvisart says it is ischury of the bladder, orders blisters and hot baths. But I have a presentiment that it is what took my father—There, I jest again. Do not heed me. Above all do not repeat this to my soldiers." And rigidly he braced himself against the carriage seat. But the faithful Duroc noticed in the light of the occasional street-lamps, as they rode back to the palace, that his lips were compressed as though with suffering, his face drawn and pale.

He did not sleep much that night; and across the river Letizia lay dry-eyed until dawn, sorrowing for a conqueror and sulky boy who, she was sure, would get a very sad come-uppance.

In the morning, however, he seemed sane and whole again, and full of energy if not the old ebullience of spirit.

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He had need of this energy, for Austria had risen from her ashes, had broken the pact, turned on him again, and was driving with two hundred and twenty thousand men into the heart of his ally Bavaria.

As the hours passed and he finished his preparations, he grew rather serene about it. "I leave my best troops with Joseph," he wrote Berthier, almost gaily, "and start for Vienna with my little conscripts, my name, and my long boots."

And almost before Berthier received it and his foes knew it, he was near the Danube again, confronting with half their number the quarter-million of the whitecoats. His line was dangerously extended, with an unavoidable gap in the center. Trying to close it before the Austrians broke through, he held them off, meantime sending desperate despatches to Davoust, eight leagues away, to Masséna, twelve, "Come at once and on the dot!" Carefully he calculated the time it would take them to march over the plain; then when that time was up, before he could see the dust of their marching columns, he struck; and Masséna and Davoust, coming up on the run and on schedule, hit them laterally as he broke the center; and the battle was over.

But there were more battles. At Ratisbon, a few days later, he was wounded. His marshals begged him to retire. Said he: "What can I do? I must see how things get on." No convalescence, no rest, no sleep—and more battles; and he was on the Danube to finish the campaign with one great stroke. Only half of his army had crossed when the floods came down, sweeping away his bridges. In the face of flood and foe, he rebuilt those bridges and once more beat off the Austrians. But the victory was at

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a price, for first the litters brought in Saint-Hilaire, then Lannes, the “lion-hearted,” with both legs shot off at the thigh. They laid him by the emperor under a giant oak.

“What hope?” the emperor asked Corvisart, his Luke, his beloved physician, who in defeat was to be one of the first to desert.

“None, Sire; he has no strength left for *this* battle.”

“Fool that he was!” exclaimed the emperor, resorting, as mortals will do, to complaint to hide his grief. “He fights for three days without sleep, then cannot resist a woman who sends a *billet-doux*. He gallops off, spends the night with her, then at dawn gallops back into battle. Bah! He might have been saved. Woman! The very name spells ruin.”

For two days the lion-heart lay under the oak from which they feared to move him, calling again and again in his delirium for his emperor. Not so long ago they had had differences. In an unwonted fit of pique when Napoleon was troubled by affairs in Spain, Lannes had complained, “The emperor loves you by fits and starts.” But now in full tide came back the old affection.

“Talk not to me of my soul,” he said to the priest, “but send for the emperor.” Both in delirium and lucid interval Napoleon seemed his god: without him he was inconsolable; in his presence he ignored the pain.

And the emperor, despite his battles, spent most of the time under that tree, though he scarcely could bear the pleading look in those eyes which had never faltered before any man’s, not even his chief’s, and now would waver only before a mightier conqueror. Like a child the broken warrior clung to him; and toward the end, he said: “It is farewell for me; but take care of that

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life which is so dear to us all. And—sometime—” a spasm passed over the face, and Napoleon bent down to catch the last accents—“sometime think of one who loved you and will fight by your side no more.”

They do not make such speeches now; but they made them then, thinking it as meet for a soldier to face death with a ringing line as to face battle with a *bon mot* or touch of bravado.

Perhaps it does not matter; but very gently the emperor closed the dauntless eyes. “Farewell, lion-heart,” he said; then his officers heard him mutter, “Muiron, Desaix, Stengel, Leclerc, Kléber, Joubert, Saint-Hilaire, and now Lannes!”

Then, victory in sight, but with the Spanish ulcer eating into his giant system, another nearer under his heart, death too eating into his ranks, he sought his tent. None, that night, dared disturb him.

CHAPTER XXIX

Josephine Plays Her Last Card

THESE days of the falling leaf were sad for Josephine. From long association a wife sometimes reads her husband, and others told her of little straws showing whither flowed the current of his thoughts. One particularly, like his hate of England, had become an obsession with him. As he galloped hither and thither over Europe, or paused for a moment in his palaces, he hugged this thought even as he repelled it, until like Vice it had at last been embraced. Divorce—the one way out. By a new marriage he might find that heir, also cement his alliances; and he must cement them if he would not ride forever up and down the world. And he must hurry, for while his heirs might possibly carry on a system firmly consolidated, they could not complete one three quarters done. His vitality was tremendous, but some day it would flag; and he was beginning now to know at times what it meant to be tired.

Concurrently with his thoughts ran the whispers around Paris—through the palaces facing the Champs Elysées, behind the lofty shutters of the Ile St.-Louis, on the balconies of fashionable St.-Germain, over the saddles on the Bois, around the tables of little outdoor cafés, in attics under the eternal chimney-pots, among the very cabbages and haricots of the Halles. In the gaming places

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they were laying bets about it, though furtively so that these might not reach an emperor death on public gambling and scandalous talk. Still the odds were bruited abroad. Altogether it was the choicest morsel of gossip since the rumors of his coming from Egypt; and even as she walked in the Tuileries Gardens, fountains and horse-chestnuts rustled their versions of it in Josephine's ears.

On Friday, Madame Junot, the Duchesse d' Abrantes, wife of the wild governor of Paris, and once the little Laure Permon, called at Malmaison. Like all the rest, the duchess had had her head slightly turned by the sudden rise to eminence, the gilt and baroque titles, and the spinning around the imperial planet. Also, like the rest, she was too much worried about keeping in her own orbit to feel concern about another luminary being cast out of hers. Still, she showed as much sympathy for the empress as one could when guessing with the rest as to who would take that empress's place—a facile sympathy so evident in all eyes now that sometimes Josephine thought she would swoon from it.

Some years before, when ambassadress to Madrid, the duchess had sent a potted plant from the Pyrenees to Josephine. This afternoon they must see how it was getting on. So together, with Laure's little daughter, Josephine's namesake and godchild, they strolled over the scarlet and yellow windrows to the greenhouse. Laure was now lady in waiting to Madame Mère, had just come from the Hôtel Brienne; and, hoping to find out how the wind blew from that quarter, Josephine timidly tried to sound her out.

Had the empress mother said anything about her?

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“Nothing, your Majesty,” said Duchess Laurette; truthfully too, for Letizia was not given to meddlesome gossip or crowing over a falling foe.

“The Princess Borghese then?”

The duchess tried to change the conversation, but the empress persisted.

“Well,” admitted Laurette, “she gossips sometimes, but you cannot take seriously anything Pauline says. She is as pretty as a picture but so indolent that she is content to sit on a sofa all day and be admired.”

“Perhaps,” suggested Josephine, “that is why Napoleon loves her. He really wants something to pet, for all he declares so violently that a woman should be like Cæsar’s wife, virtuous and a bearer of strong children.” She dabbed at her eyes. “But then who can tell what a man wants? He demands the adorably feminine when in the mood, then steel when he asks her to sacrifice all for his happiness.” And again she sighed. She too had been “adorably feminine,” but where should she find that steel?

“I certainly prefer her to the queen of Naples,” Laurette ran on, trying to skirt this subject so near to tears. “Caroline is handsome enough above the shoulders; but her neck is too short, and her head, like all the Bonapartes except Lucien and Pauline, is too large for her body.

“Her legs, too, are bad, though that does not matter so much as in the days of the Directorate, now that the emperor insists on less diaphanous gowns. But most of all I hate that sneer on her lips, as if she and her Murat were better than anybody in the world, her brother included. Pauline mimics, loves to get people in embarrassing positions; yet she is too light-hearted for venom. But Caroline!” She threw up her hands.

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“The queen of Naples has arrived then,” said the empress with a catch in her throat. For well she knew what it meant: the gathering of the clans to accomplish her downfall, also that Caroline would entertain at state functions while divorce proceedings were under way and new banns were being cried.

“Yes, the queen came the day before yesterday,” the duchess replied, hurriedly. But she must ascribe a reason so as not to alarm the empress; ah, yes: “She has come to be at the fête. They are planning a most gorgeous one at the Hôtel de Ville. There will be quadrilles; twenty-four in native costume will dance something Bohemian, and tableaux will follow. Caroline has a mantle of purple and a heavy helmet that will make her look actually dowdy; but Paulette, as Italy, will be beautiful. She wears —picture it—a dolman of gold scales with a tunic of muslin embroidered in gold, on her wrists bracelets with the Borghese cameos, on her little head a light casque of gold with wavy white ostrich-feathers, and carries a pike incrusted with gems. There will also be sandals; which is why she wore the costume, for she is quite proud of her small feet.—La-la!” she added, for in tête-à-têtes court favorites could be quite familiar with the gentle Josephine, “the emperor will open his eyes when he sees the sheerness of that tunic. And let no one tell you that Pauline’s legs are not good. They are simply perfect, as the world will see that night.”

The prattling duchess had meant to be tactful but couldn’t have been more cruel if she had been actually spiteful. Once Josephine would have found chatter of fêtes at the City Hall engrossing; but to be informed of fêtes in which she should have had a hand was to have

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things driven home; and tears watered the begonia they were pretending to inspect.

She tried to tell herself, "Ah, well! I have had thirteen years of splendor; it is enough." But it was not. One can say with complacency, "*She* has had her day," but not "*I* have had my day"; that is, at forty-six.

And since, when one is brooding, all things seem signs emphasizing grief, her eyes took in the little Josephine Permon, racing between the rows of blossoms and earth-filled boxes of the greenhouse, as a symbol of her own barrenness. Eagerly she knelt on the damp path, her face brushed by the fronds of the ferns, the scarlet of the begonia blooms against its olive, and caught the child to her breast, as though she thus vicariously clutched the price of her salvation.

The little godchild looked up into the empress's face. She did not call her "your Majesty," but said, "Pretty lady, I wish you wouldn't cry; it makes me sorry to see you cry."

Now Madame Laurette must return to her duties in Letizia's household; and she bade the empress adieu. Disconsolate, Josephine walked through the scarlet and yellow aisles to the gray walls where the violets had bloomed. Four years ago she had shown them to him, after their reconciliation, that afternoon when he had lodged her milliner in jail. But there were no more violets.

In these days, too, Fouché came, suave and simpering, to tell her she must sacrifice herself for her and his dear country France. Perhaps he was trying to gain face with the emperor by this busybody's piece of impertinence; still, Napoleon, when he heard of it, waxed very wroth. He would have chosen other messengers, and now he was

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in a dilemma. For he was surrounded by a crowd of which he could disgustedly observe: "The devil! If I blow my nose, they make the walls of Paris echo to the report!" And word of Fouché's advice to Josephine had been diligently passed about. If he reprimanded Fouché, the rebuke would be given equal notoriety, would serve as public notice that he did not consider divorce. He must ignore the incident. So far had he got that he, the bold, the despiser of the crowd, was listening with his ear close to the ground.

He had always, too, galloped swiftly into capitals, raced up the steps of palaces, and in their teeth delivered his messages to kings and queens. Now for breaking the news to this gentle disconsolate lady he chose a substitute. He sent for Eugène.

The interview was as affecting as one may be when a man's conduct accords with his good business sense but runs counter to his heart and all those very admirable instincts with which he has been endowed.

"Eugène," he began, the youth too knowing what it was all about, and neither, for the moment, looking at each other. "Eugène, I have loved you as a son."

"You have, Sire," the prince answered simply, as he stood there, shoulders back, hands gripping sword-hilt as though steeling himself for the blow. "I can never repay the debt."

"We will not speak of that," returned the emperor; "but there is a difficult situation I have to face."

Pausing, he turned to a window in that corner of the palace which overlooks the Seine, at the Pont Royal, and so many of his palaces and monuments. It was a glorious view, one of which he was quite proud; but now he was not

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taking it in at all, thinking of that situation. Well, it was difficult; therefore must be faced. He would get it over quickly, tear out the nerve. He turned to the prince.

“Undoubtedly you know to what I refer. I have loved your mother, will never love any one as I have her; but France is at a desperate pass. I cannot keep my head above the waves, unless I make a new alliance that will join to France a powerful state and in addition perhaps provide me with an heir. It is a sad lot that Fate has visited on your mother.” He paused a moment—then, since when it came to the amputation all past wounds were forgot: “She has deserved a better. But monarchs are the servants of the state and cannot wed as they choose. She must make her sacrifice as I make mine.”

Eugène, wistfully wondering whether the sacrifice were not a little heavier on one side, answered nothing; and the emperor came to the point.

“It is a hard thing I must ask of you, Eugène, but it is a duty I know you will bravely discharge for France. You alone can break the news to your mother sympathetically. It will come better from you.”

Hurt as Napoleon might be by the conduct of his own family, he had little to complain of in Josephine’s children. It was a bitter cup that this loyalty now earned. Eugène, brave but sweet and amiable like his mother, was now a little too faithful, a little too easily swayed. He took up the cup.

What words were said, what reproaches uttered, what tears shed at this interview between mother and son no one knew. Only her maids of honor, restless through pity for her, and wandering through the halls of Malmaison, heard her sobbing softly in the night; and once, these

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words: "And now my children—against me. Holy Mother! Jésus! It is too much!"

Finally the husband and wife met—for the last time as husband and wife—at dinner at the Tuileries. Her face was shadowed by a large hat; she did not want him to see her eyes. Though he controlled his feelings in a grip of steel, he himself was deeply moved. When a branch is grafted on a tree, with it has waved through years of tempest and sunshine, branch and tree become part and parcel of each other. And though the tree may resent the persistence with which the branch will not show blossoms like the tree's but always its own, exotic perhaps and more fragrant and colorful, still the tree knows when they are torn apart. Further, if the graft has been made when both were still young, no other branch can ever be knit so closely with it.

So through the first of the few courses of the meal no word was spoken. And she kept thinking to herself: "Ah! If only he would not keep so tight a grip on himself. If only I could break it!"

At last he dismissed the attendants who, to his intense irritation, hovered near his elbows, leaned over the coffee and grasped her hand. She let it lie inert in his, and he, man-like, was annoyed that she did not make it easier for him; and broke out the more baldly because of his emotion:

"It must be done. Can't you see?" Then, feeling he was harsh and being very unhappy, his tones changed to the more lovable ones she so well remembered; and he used all along the beloved "thou," whose note of affection no language can so well convey as the French.

"Josephine, my excellent Josephine, thou knowest that

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I love thee. To thee alone I owe the only moments of happiness I have known in this life. But powerful as I am, I am not my own master. Destiny denies the plea of my heart. We must yield to the need of our country."

So one alien to another alien; one heartsick and stern and set, the other heartsick and unnerved and trembling all over.

"Say no more," she said, "about France. Think of the woman. I was prepared for this; but the blow is no less mortal."

The sentence, poignant though it was, deceived him as to her composure. Just when he believed the worst to be over, she gave way, cried: "I cannot give you up! I will not give you up!" then, screaming, fell in what appeared to be a dead faint.

Monsieur de Bausset, prefect of the palace, heard the screams and came in on the run to find a pale emperor holding a still paler empress.

"Quick, Bausset! The empress is ill. Carry her to her apartment." And seizing a lamp from the table, he led the way down the staircase toward the *entresol*.

Half-way down, she whispered to the prefect, "You hold me too tight." Either the swoon had not been complete or she had come to. Still she continued to simulate it. But the prefect did not blame her. One must work in one's medium, use her own weapons where the odds are so great. Besides, mechanics are no proof of insincerity, and even an actress can feel deeply.

Nor did the tactful man betray her; and the emperor was not aware that she had revived when, lamp in hand, with the other he took hold of her ankles, to help a little, for she was a dead-weight on the slender Bausset.

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Never had he stepped so quickly around Europe as now around that room in the *entresol*; sending for Corvisart, his beloved physician, for Hortense, and pulling the bell violently for Montesquieu, Avrillon, Ali—anybody, everybody who might be about and prove of assistance.

At last, with eyes fluttering open at the proper tempo, she let it be known that she was restored; and, looking down in consternation at her disarray, rearranged herself.

Then Napoleon in an aside, “What is it, Corvisart?”—Corvisart, “Hysterics, sire; nothing more.”—And the emperor to himself, “So she has resorted to that again.” His brow knit. “But she feels it—she feels it, none the less. Ah, Josephine, Josephine!” Still, it was better to get the agony over; and he left without a word.

In the end, the will of France—or one individual—prevailed over a frail woman. The week was not out when she informed him by letter—strange way of communication between two who had been so close—that she would agree to the divorce. The phrases of the letter were lofty as well as graceful. She had risen from hysterics to the nobility of renunciation.

Now if one has had a place in the sun, one must not grieve in private but in the sun for all the world to see; and there were formalities to be gone through before the Senate and the dignitaries of the Empire.

A goodly array of court dresses and ribbons, sabers and plumes, gathered at the palace for this event, on a drizzly Thursday in December in the Salle de la Liberté. Joseph was still in Madrid, Lucien plowing and excavating for old Roman busts, and coins like his profile, on his

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new farm at Canino. But there sat on one side of the hall a goodly representation of the kings and queens of the family: Letizia, erect, and a trifle forbidding this day, but striking-looking; Eliza, imperturbable; Louis, still acid from his tiffs with Hortense; Caroline, the sneer on her handsome mouth; Pauline, darting little soft looks among the sabers.

In the center of the hall was a table with a gold ink-stand and a gold pen ready waiting; by it an empty arm-chair.

No voices were heard, but the silence of marble pillar, cold frieze, still mural, and gilt cornice was broken by the click of saber-points on the pavements, a nervous cough from among the embroidered tunics of the councilors of state, or the scrape of a chair as some *dame du palais* shifted uneasily in her seat.

Over by the table, with a hat so tilted that the dangling plumes concealed his features, stood that man of swift motions, Napoleon. He might this day have been mistaken for one of the statues, so still he stood awaiting Josephine.

From the grand staircase where had died the red Swiss, she entered, leaning on her daughter's arm. Like Marie Antoinette, her predecessor in the palace, when she looked for the last time over the horse-chestnuts at these windows, from the Place de la Revolution over there, she was dressed very simply, in white. Her chin, though, was not so high; a sweet melancholy rather than pride seemed to envelop her. Still, there were no tears, except in the violet eyes of Hortense, who supported her, yet whose figure trembled like the willow through strong emotion. As they came forward over the floor toward the circle of

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faces, the violet eyes, red-rimmed now, alternately seemed to be casting defiance at those who had caused her mother this humiliation, then appealing to them to spare her. At the sight the statue-like emperor was shaken out of his pose, and the dangling plumes trembled. But except for this tremor, which came from some inner violence, there was no move. The archchancellor waved the two toward the empty chair and the little gold pen waiting on the table.

The empress sat down, lowered her head, raised it, Hortense hovering over her as the archchancellor began his rounded periods, explaining why the emperor should give this stab at a weak woman, and explaining it conclusively to all but the wailing ladies in waiting, Eugène trembling on his sword-hilt, to Hortense sobbing audibly now above her mother's chair, and to a statue-like emperor who had just been shaken out of his poise.

The rounded periods over, the empress arose and took the oath in that contralto which usually had a lilt, but now a choke in it, and which echoed through the halls with a mournful melody after Cambacérès's bass. Then, without a tremor, she took the pen and signed. There was no reception after the ceremonies.

That night, once again, as he had done on his return from Egypt, Napoleon tore up his notes and botched his state papers. About twelve, he had thrown himself down, weary among the pillows, when the door swung open, very softly. So he gathered her in his arms, held her sobbing to his breast. It was the last time on earth that they were thus together.

Later, just before her death, when Time, which mellows all sorrows, had softened hers, she told, with some

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reserves, of this hour; perhaps in his defense, perhaps to show that she had held, as no other had, his affection. To those who heard the recital it was not all theoretic.

In the morning, Napoleon, who had not slept since she had stolen out so softly, glanced out of his cabinet. A coach and six stood in the court. All the staff of the palace surrounded it, the women, many of the men too, weeping. The lady of this house of kings for the last time emerged, veiled; passed through the crowd, giving her hand to this one and that to be kissed, touching others, as though with a caress, on the shoulder. Then she entered the coach, drew the shades, and the horses trotted off. She did not look back at the palace or up at him. And he pressed himself close against the wall, watching the wheels revolve—out of the gates of the gardens, then —by the spot where Joan of Arc had fallen by the old city wall—disappear.

CHAPTER XXX

Mother and Child Do Well

ALIMONY, of course, cannot make up for love or a throne; but Napoleon, without any judgment of court, was generous enough; gave her an almost imperial income, with Malmaison, and a country place in Navarre, with additional sums for furnishings.

In March there was also some refurnishing of Marie Antoinette's and Josephine's old apartments in the *entresol* of the Tuilleries. Here were brought some carpets, tapestries, canaries, and parrots from Vienna, with a little lap-dog, usurper in the place of Fortuné, Josephine's old pet. A lady, a princess of Austria, had wept on parting with them, and, to solace her, Napoleon had his chief of staff, Berthier, who had a genius for mobilization, bring them on from the Danube.

Napoleon had first asked the czar for a grand duchess, had given two days for an answer; but the czar's mother did not like this parvenu any more than had the queen of Prussia. It would be a *mésalliance*, she said. So there was a delay, and, the two days being up, Napoleon proposed to his old foe Austria for a daughter and was this time more successful. Maria Louisa was prettyish, pink, plump, had a wholesome enough bringing up, and seemed innocent of thought, not having met Count Neipperg. And the difficulty about the dog and parrots having been

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arranged, she came on with her wagon-train of trunks; Letizia, who had been lady of the house for a short three months, moved back to the rue St.-Dominique; and Napoleon escorted his bride over the threshold. He was joyous, exuberant, as would be a middle-aged man with a soft capture of twenty, who brought as her *dot* the friendship of a great power. Indeed some thought him that day of April, 1810, too boisterous as a bridegroom and not nearly so attractive as the one who in the new general's uniform, sallow-featured and blazing-eyed, threw down his heart for a creole to dance *6n*.

Letizia at least was a little disgusted. She had not cared for Josephine, but it might have been a little more decent to lie on the bed he had made, after so many years.

“Perhaps,” she observed to Fesch, who was wearing his nephew’s gift, that red hat which they had so jocularly forecast at the bedside of the archdeacon—“perhaps it would be better even in so great affairs to trust to one’s heart, to be more like the little child which, you preach, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven. You will say that this is a very earthly kingdom, but I am not so sure that emperors wouldn’t in the long run be better off if they yielded to their decent instincts.”

Which cryptic indictment of Napoleon did not prevent her from defending him to Louis, when Louis came back to Paris, en route for Provence, having deserted his wife and the crown in Holland.

“If you had shown yourself half the man your brother is,” she declared with scorn, “you would never have left that throne.”

Louis had his reasons. Angered by his mother’s severity,

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he explained these with heat and something of confusion.

“It was I that was king of Holland, mother, or was it Napoleon? Surely, if it were I, I should have safeguarded my subjects. He wanted to make me his puppet, to use me and the Dutch to help his blockade against England. And he ordered me violently to continue a Frenchman when I should have been a Dutchman, being king of the Dutch.”

Letizia, though eminently just, was a woman and had her own idea as to which loyalty should be paramount. Besides, though somewhat bewildered by events, she was shrewd enough to hit on an interpretation of this Dutch affair that might not reflect so hardly on Napoleon.

“Could you not have been loyal Frenchman and good Dutchman both?” she asked. “Would it help Holland more to be an ally of England than of France? You opened your ports to England, and it was through them that all these English muslins and coffee which flood Europe came in. So you helped to frustrate his schemes; worked against this brother who, when you were little, starved for you, educated you, and now has given you a throne.

“*Aie!* I have defended you before, you and Lucien and Joseph, who only last week came whining back from Spain because he could not hold what his brother gave him. But I know you, my sons. You are obstinate, perverse. You profess your great principles—believe them, no doubt—but in asserting them you lean so far over backward that you forget the first principles of faith—loyalty to a brother and your benefactor who brought you to the top. That obstinacy is your only defense, but, *per Dio!* it is not enough. No wonder he says, ‘I have only to make a brother a king to make him my enemy.’ Better, my son, one who is a strong man and tyrant, if you call

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him that, than a man whose fine principles are but names for vanity, disloyalty, and fear."

She paused, gathered breath. "But you are not weaklings. It is this cursed politics of France that has befogged you ever since we set foot on her soil. People should not leave the soil where they were born. Those who do are without roots, without country. But at least, you can be faithful to him. And you do not know how much he will need you soon."

The wedding had taken place in 1810, in the spring. In the fall a new hope was whispered about Paris, in drawing-room and attic; and when the March winds blew again, the new empress, while walking in the Tuileries Gardens, felt the first pangs. They got her, weeping with fear, up the steps to the *entresol*, and most of that night Napoleon was with her, for she was horribly afraid.

A little after dawn, he left the boudoir to speak to some of the notables who had gathered in the salons, awaiting the event, when the *accoucheur* came running wildly after him. The child had presented itself in an unfavorable posture; if anything happened to the empress or heir, it might not mean, "Off with his head!" but he would have to leave Paris; and he had a very lucrative obstetrical practice. He was completely unnerved.

So the usual procedure was reversed; instead of the doctor supporting the father going through this trying experience for the first time, the father must support the experienced but flustered doctor.

"The devil, Dubois!" Napoleon exclaimed, "Calm yourself. You should lose your head no more than I do on the field of battle. This is your battle. All you have to do is stop reflecting that you are delivering an empress

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and imagine it is any woman, the wife of some draper, and all will be well."

Somewhat reassured, the trembling *accoucheur* hurried back to the bedchamber, where, surrounding the groaning empress, were twenty-two witnesses — duchesses, ladies of honor, maids, and keepers of the wardrobe, with Corvisart, Napoleon's own medical adviser. But still Dubois was afraid to proceed.

Corvisart stepped back from the canopy and whispered to Napoleon as he reentered the chamber.

"Of course—the mother! By all means! If you think, Corvisart, there must be a choice." And Corvisart relayed this order to Dubois, who was fumbling among the steel instruments on the table, while the emperor went over to the bedside and stroked the frightened Maria Louisa's hair.

Now, it was her first experience, as it was Napoleon's; she had an idea that the physicians were treating her more roughly than a less illustrious patient, and grew convinced that she was to be sacrificed to the heir. So when Dubois approached with the shining steel, scream after scream, as much from fear as travail, tore the air. These sounded down the halls and through the windows until wanderers on the *quais* shook their heads. To think that a lady so great should have to share so common an agony and peril!

Napoleon was now consideration itself, holding her hand tightly in his clasp, bending down to whisper words of courage and cheer. When the travail was over and she swooned, he did not once notice the infant, laid, as he himself had been, on a red carpet, until the doctors assured him that all was well with her.

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Indeed, in their concern for the racked frame of the mother, they nearly dashed the hopes of France; but he was rubbed, spanked, like the most ordinary of infants, just in time, and, right royally swaddled, shown to his sire.

But he could not hear his son's yells. For word had gone down the corridors, and all was agitation and rejoicing in the city. Horsemen were racing over the stones, organs making musical thunder in the churches; and cannon began to boom over the Seine.

Still on the horsemen raced, waving to little men aloft, who instantly began to tug on ropes and leap on the giant rims of the bells. One could see them whirling in all the steeples and belfries till all the world seemed filled, first with the violent cannon salvos and the surge of the organs, then with the din of those bells—bells—bells, and the poor empress put hands to her ears and gasped for breath.

And then the chimes from hillsides and villages beyond Paris joined in, adding to the clangorous abandon of these iron and brazen city throats sweet overtones made mellower by distance. Even the church of Rueil in the village hard by Malmaison sent up its notes, and the veiled Josephine, sitting on the marble bench by the wind-break of cypress where the emperor had played with the little Charles Napoleon, heard and bowed her head.

All this, she knew, was no wild alarum for horsemen riding down on the walls but a jubilant acclaim for six pounds of puling brick-red humanity high-and-mightily called King of Rome, and who—so a fond foolish father and most excellent business man thought—would prove a fine junior partner for the great firm.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Drums Beat the Retreat

IN the end it might have been better had those wild bells of Paris sounded the alarm, for foes visible massing to the east, for others invisible and nearer at hand. The tall, personable young czar, having his own ideas as to who should be "first man in all the world," had thrown down the gage. Bernadotte, sulky still, had left his councils to be crown prince of Sweden, had joined his foes and those of France; and Spain was still restive and Prussia wavering.

And the domestic situation was not reassuring. Thinking to make his home the world's spiritual as well as political capital, Napoleon had dragged the pope to Fontainebleau and thus offended the clericals. His embargo against England, too, had galled. Had his agents even remotely approached him in executive ability, it might have worked; but it had turned all Europe into a nest of smugglers, made trade chaotic, and business was anything but good.

Further, traitors were multiplying, and the new conscripts were not up to the mark. So many hundreds of thousands had marched up his paths of glory to their

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inevitable end that in the eyes even of Frenchmen that glory had begun to be dimmed. Instead of looking on him as a dramatic figure, wits saw in him a subject for lampoons. Ridicule not alone came from England but the faubourgs. And on his very palace door, at the height of the recent rejoicings, some one nailed a placard, "*Fabrique de Cires*," which not only suggests a factory of waxworks but, by grace of a pun, one of kings.

But still no king or private citizen in Europe dared lampoon him to his face. The darts of ridicule were all shot from the dark. Mindful of them, but disdainful, he leaped into his carriage and galloped into Berlin. There, too, a king dared not defy him to his teeth.

"Russia has broken her word, and you think to go with Russia," he said to this king. "Very well; we will not talk of perfidy. But consider this: I shall win, and you might as well be on the winning side."

It was all very persuasive, and for the time Prussia and his father-in-law threw in their fortunes with his. On the banks of the Niemen gathered a hundred and fifty thousand Germans from the Rhine, eighty thousand from Italy under Prince Eugène, sixty thousand Poles, fifty thousand Austrians and Prussians, ninety thousand Portuguese, Spaniards, and Swiss, with two hundred thousand of his French, all waiting the little man's word for the long march to Moscow.

During the mobilization he had returned to the palace; now all seemed ready, but one thing was missing. For a time he could not think what it was. Then instinct suggested it: the old God-speed on his journey, from a lady older than he by seven years, light-hearted and frivolous and at times extravagant, yet again so sweetly under-

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standing. Ah, he must go out to Malmaison for farewell! But he could not go. Maria Louisa would make another scene. Another farewell must suffice, a kiss from a lady not growing old but with all the advantages of soft flesh and youth. But it did not suffice, such charms can Time and Memory and a frail lady weave.

So on a bright morning the bugles blew; all day the hoof-beats sounded on the bridges of the Niemen, with rolling cannon and marching feet; and from the west into the mystery that was Russia, the emperor disappeared.

For months Paris was like a woman who wearily awaits her husband, taking only a perfunctory interest in her tasks and the calls of women as restless as herself. Never had there been a man who so completely filled the life of a capital and country. To see other kings and conquerors they might cull out a holiday. But the eyes of France, almost of the whole world, were every day in the year on this man of few inches. In salon and attic he was the perpetual subject of tale and gossip, and people were forever pausing in their tasks to gaze at his trail as one might look up at a comet in the sky.

And so little news trickled through. What did come was alarming. At first the cannon by the Invalides had sounded and all the church bells had rung for Smolensk, Moskowa, Borodino, where Murat and Ney or some other, with Napoleon, wrote their names higher in the annals of the Empire. With December—all at once—in vague, mysterious ways, came rumors of disaster.

In the height of his glory the emperor had sat under the fifty times fifty minarets and top-like towers of the Krem-

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lin whose acres of wood and stone seemed to give form to the most fantastic Arabian Nights' dream. There, oblivious to the on-coming winter, he waited in rash confidence for Alexander to come to terms.

And then, one night, as he gazed from a high window over this sea of gilded cupolas, others had suddenly flashed against the sky, unstable shifting minarets fashioned of flame. Troops of long-cloaked shadows appeared as if by magic, flitted over the roofs with phosphor and torches in their hands, throwing these, wherever there was timber or straw. In one moment the "Holy City" was a Pentecost, each quarter with innumerable tongues of fire. These were whipped higher by a wind hurling itself out of the north and increasing the roar in the streets, choked now with plunging horses; officers smiting with sabers; overturned wagons; spilled kegs; ghouls laden with pillage; brutish figures lapping up wine from the gutters; and children running, stumbling, crying feebly for their mothers and falling under hoofs or wheels. Powder magazines, suddenly reached by those tongues, added their detonations and shook the city with a succession of earthquakes.

On these scenes Napoleon stared motionless. The old melancholy that had sometimes visited him now settled down in a graver form, plunging him from the heights where he had soared into a bottomless well of despair. That nap in the Kremlin had indeed been fatal.

It was with the greatest difficulty now that his officers could hurry him out of this furnace. Outside the walls, he still stared like one in a daze at the flames rising and falling in the city, the fugitives milling around him with a roar like that of the flames. But at last he touched the

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bottom of that well, began to rise, and ordered the drums to beat the retreat. It was a long time since he had given such an order, and never for retreat over so many leagues, cruel and cold, and white like skulls, so clean had they been picked.

Only the Old and Young Guards maintained their stern discipline. The rest straggled on, bottles at mouths, munching dainties, clad in furred pelisses, Russian dolmans and capes, stolen necklaces, and bright mandarin coats. Wine, caviar, and pastries were not meat for stout stomachs ; and such fancy provisions too soon gave out. March succeeded march, and there was no sign of wood or wheat.

Now, as the days wore on, the gay stolen plumage became tattered ; keen winds whipped through old uniforms and bright mandarin coats ; shoeless feet left pink prints on the white. A wagon jolting over a road leaves wisps of hay in its wake ; so the trail of the Grand Army was marked to the horizon's edge by fugitives trying to rise, then falling back ; by Cossacks pricking their way over the snow and pausing to thrust their spears downward ; by ravens circling above far black dots ; and the ghostly gray wolves. These and the ravens were the only forms not emaciated in the entire stark landscape.

At last the emperor reached Warsaw, himself a grotesque figure, so the reports reached Paris, in an old pelisse and bad boots. The six hundred and fifteen thousand of his Grand Army had melted away as those snows which they had traversed would melt--too late for their salvation. But he would soon be in Paris ; and Napoleon on the spot was worth a million soldiers.

He came, rapidly, breaking down many a good horse,

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over hills and valleys and rivers, to reach the gates at night ; so late that at first, not recognizing him, they refused to let him through. Then, with the Duke of Vincenza, he hurried to the palace, and down the long halls to the door of his bride. A waiting woman, seeing this figure, unshaven and swathed in furs, screamed. He brushed her aside ; burst in. The empress too screamed. Later she made up for it ; but, no, the welcome was not like the old.

In the morning he was bathed and shaved, in his simple green chasseur's coat, for a moment playing with his son, then at his desk sending out despatches. Despatches also came in. Soult was holding out well in Spain ; but Masséna had been defeated. Bernadotte with his Swedish legions and Moreau whom Napoleon had pardoned had actively joined the coalition ; and now that the eagle was wounded, Prussia and his father-in-law had also deserted. But he would not wait for the wings to heal. Money and munitions, must be raised and more conscripts—four hundred thousand more ; not so promising, either, since they had been begotten of nervous mothers in the days of the Terror ; but he would supply the iron. Insane they called him, but he did not cry out from his wounds ; and he attended to all these tasks with a swiftness and efficiency quite extraordinary in a crazy man.

It seemed that he was forever riding to the Rhine and the Danube ; but thither he must gallop again, with his four hundred thousand whelps of the Terror, supported luckily by his Guard. And again he had beaten them. But Junot had died, a real madman at last ; and then, as they had Lannes, they brought, first Bessières and Lasalle, then Duroc in.

Through some strange quirk of feeling, he rebelled at

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seeing Duroc. "I cannot go," he cried. "I could not stand it after Lannes."

Nevertheless, pulling himself together, he went to the cottage, bent over the pallet where Duroc lay—no longer the elegant and urbane—muddied now and shattered, but still nobly stern.

"My faithful friend," the emperor said, looking down while the guns roared without, "we shall meet again."

"Yes, Sire," said the voice, fading as it spoke, the eyes gazing up steadily but seeming to retreat to fields far from that on which the guns sounded. "We shall meet, but it will be in thirty years when you have triumphed over all your foes."

What prompted the prophecy no one knew, but it was thirty years, almost to the day, when they brought his chief home to rest in the Invalides.

But now the eyes had forever retreated. The lids the emperor closed, then told off on his fingers—Joseph, Lucien, all my brothers, not with me in spirit; Bernadotte, Moreau, traitors; Talleyrand, Fouché, Savary, Murat, bargaining with my foes; Muiron, Stengel, Desaix, Kléber, Leclerc, Joubert, Saint-Hilaire, Junot, Lannes, Lasalle, Bessières, Duroc—no more would they answer the roll-call. Who would be next to follow those unseen but so clearly heard bugles—or to betray him?

So one more victory—a draw—then a defeat at Leipzig. And almost before he knew it, the unbelievable had happened. His legions that had broken all others for so long were shattered, tumbled back on themselves, borne back, broken, over the Rhine. A few more short weeks, and he who had ridden so triumphantly over all borders was driven within his own, almost with his back against

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the wall; and millions were arming against him, all galloping to be in at the death.

Like the great ice-fields in spring, his mighty empire had begun to break up. They could hear it crack all over the world.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Cannon Roar in the Plain of Paris

ON a spring day in 1814, Letizia paused on the Pont Royal. With her were Laurette, Duchesse d' Abrantes, now in widow's weeds, and Mlle. de Launey, who long ago had visited Ajaccio and was now established in Letizia's household. Both stayed at a discreet distance from the empress mother. She had been unwontedly irritable this morning; and they left her to her reflections as she leaned on the parapet and watched the Seine flowing on to the sea.

Rarely had she thus appeared in public, but she had taken it in her head this morning to look over the city they all said was so fine. It would be her last chance, and few would recognize her in this old lady of sixty-four, on foot, in dark clothes of good material, but very plain, and the correct bonnet with such simple flowers. It did not occur to her that her regal bearing, unmatched in any other capital, might betray Madame Mère.

Yes, it was all very fine—so many beautiful bridges over the bending river, the stately gray Tuileries and Louvre on the right bank; just beyond, brown St.-Germain l'Auxerrois, where the chimes had rung for a massacre; the tower of St.-Jacques all flames, carved in stone; and, on the island of La Cité, the cone-capped towers of the Conciergerie, the needle spire of St.-Chapelle, and the wise

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old belfries of Notre Dame. Each tower, each wall, every stone, had its history; but then she had never cared for French history.

The Tuileries Gardens were better. There tulips were crimson and yellow, the candelabra of the horse-chestnuts pink and white, the new growth of the evergreens sage-green and gold. Spring had come early this year, almost as she used to come to Corsica, though not with the same fragrance wafted down from the hills. Memories, like that fragrance, were overpowering this morning.

Others of those buildings now were interesting for being so personal. There was the Elysée Palace, for one, buried in the elms beyond the Champs-Elysées. Eliza had lived there, and Pauline, with Caroline not far away. Opposite the Tuileries swept the arcades of the rue de Rivoli, which Napoleon had built, after tearing down the old convents; and, a bow-shot beyond, the shops which Jerome used to enter so swaggeringly, buying up everything in sight and sending the bills to the Tuileries to vex Napoleon.

Above the wall of the Gardens loomed his Triumphal Arch, in the distance another, half built; over the river, foundations for a great new palace for the little King of Rome were being laid; and just over her head she could see the window of the Pavillon de Flore, from which a queen had looked down on a shabby lieutenant, and behind which that lieutenant later worked so late at night. Like the towers each window had its history. The rows beyond had lighted the birth of his son; the next, Josephine signing her doom with the little gold pen. And up the river, over on the Quai Conti, was a dormer where he had starved and studied, and from which, so folks said,

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he had been evicted for not paying for his wash. No, when a young woman she had never dreamed that her family would be so closely knit with the history of Paris. But that laundry story was a lie. Napoleon might have starved but never would have failed to pay his bills.

Basta! those lies they were forever telling were half the cause of his troubles. If in boyish fun he cheated at *reversi*, he always paid back his winnings next morning. Yet they called him a blackleg and card cheat. If in the mood of the moment he made a witty remark about religion, they called him blasphemer and atheist, he who had restored religion. And if he but touched Hortense's cheek, they accused him of things unmentionable, when any one who had ever lived with him knew his hatred of the unwholesome and abnormal.

And trouble enough there was now. He was just a little way off—not so far beyond those windmills of Montmartre, Chaumont Hill, or the new graves in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, over which the rumbles of cannon came floating. He was fighting—fighting with his back against the wall, almost against those of Paris. And she who had followed her husband over the Corsican mountains when he went into battle exulted now that for his foolishness her son was showing himself the man. No wonder he was a warrior, when she had carried him under her heart over those mountains—aye, had almost borne him in the saddle.

And how he had worked this last winter!—never before so hard. Another of those Grand Armies had melted like the snows; he had come back to France with only two hundred out of fourteen hundred cannon, with fifty thousand out of a half-million men. Yet swiftly he had set his

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mills grinding; raised more levies; combed all France for cloth good and bad for his uniforms; set factories at work turning out shoes, and foundries ordnance. He did not know when he was beaten; now, alas! he had taught others how to beat him.

Something of the desperateness of his plight she had gathered. Wellington, the English duke, with his superior forces had driven great Soult out of Spain and over the hills to Bayonne. Other French divisions were held in Lorraine; more, under Rapp and Davoust, were cooped up in German cities. He might have rallied these to his side somehow when the allies came pouring over his borders; but his schemes were still too daring. He would leave these troops to hold the foe, instead of gathering them in a unified center. So, he said, they would be ready to strike back from these strategic points in the fall. Meanwhile he would himself beat back the allied armies descending on Paris, numbering three hundred and fifty thousand. With what? Why, with his remnants, sixty thousand men—these and the magic of his name. He would beat their corps separately with his old swift thrusts. But for once that name had not been enough. He was penned in, in a little narrow sector shaped like a jagged chevron between the Marne and the Seine. And now it was too late to recall the troops from Germany and Lorraine.

Joseph, while Napoleon was in the field, had been left behind as lieutenant-general of France to govern for the young empress regent. And Joseph had explained it all, shaking his head. He was always shaking his head and looking scholarly and grave when he should have been buckling on a sword. Three kings in the family, another

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for a brother-in-law, Lucien now a prince—Napoleon had been generous again—and the five would not show themselves men. But she was growing capricious like all silly women. She had criticized Napoleon, and here she was defending him. But things were different now; he was unfortunate, which made all the difference in the world. Still, she must not be too hard on the others. They were capable men, beyond the average; but in following a superhuman swimmer they had been confounded with the tides. There was only one Napoleon. . . . There had been another before him; but he had died almost at birth. A common infant complaint had taken him. Instead, that might have taken this other Napoleon. And then how the history of her family and the world would have been changed! Life was curious.

At any rate, it was well she had saved her sous. As she had said, when they chided her for her economy, "*Aïe!* some fine day all these kings will need bread!" Not that she had them all now. Millions and millions she had given Napoleon to put, with his own private fortune, into cannon for France. But she did not grudge them; she still had enough for a rainy day. And that was coming as sure as those petals would fall in the Gardens or the Seine flow on to the sea.

But now more cannon—over those windmills and the new graves. Ah, what a fight he had made! Back and forth over that little sector, back and forth, back and forth, with his hammer-strokes, so brilliantly planned and daringly executed, and hammer-strokes none the less that they were given with scarce fifty thousand against seven times their number.

Well she knew—from bulletins that came to the palace,

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borne by wearied riders on foaming horses, every hour of day and night; from the fearsome words of those kings in her family who each evening dropped in at the Hôtel Brienne. And from the letters to her ladies in waiting scrawled by their husbands, under fire and often blotted with red, she could picture him—writing his despatches late at night—on horseback gaging the field—with his horse shot under him, on foot, leading the charge—or disappearing in the smoke of a shell bursting at his feet. Details there were, too, that only a mother would pick out—the torn gray coat, the five days' beard, eyes hollow from lack of sleep, and a return of that pain in his side for which Corvisart had futilely prescribed, but which could not keep him from the saddle.

And those marshals—but guns again! Laurette was getting uneasy. Let her wait!! *Bah!* those marshals! The best were gone; now there were only Ney, Saint-Cyr, Marmont, Victor, Mortier, and Macdonald! They had fought well enough—maybe—but not equal to him. And he must be forever keeping up their flagging spirit; his alone was unbroken.

Where was it all to end? Up above, by that second tier of windows in the palace, she could see Fouché and Talleyrand with Joseph—*aïe!* those rumbles again—was that why Talleyrand ducked so instinctively as he passed the window, or was it because of his limp? Anyway, there was a prize man for you—intriguing with the Bourbons, stirring up the Royalists, bearing down on Joseph so that he in turn might bear down on Napoleon.

Already the cautious Joseph had sent to the front a servile letter suggesting surrender. And what was it Napoleon had replied? Ah, yes: “If they offer lashes, shall

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I bare my back?" Swift that answer had come, smoking from the field. And she herself had lashed then at Joseph, when he told her of it—imagine it!—by way of complaint: "*Per Dio!* Stop writing to him. Take up a sword and go to him; if need be, die with him on the field of battle!"

More rumbles—why would Laurette fidget so! That de Launey girl had far more control. But did they sound nearer? Yes, each day they came nearer. Marshal Moncey over there, another new one, was inspecting his blue-coated city guard. They seemed actually listless. And in the arcades, on the *quais*, people gathered. She knew what they were saying, could hear it from those passing her on the bridge: "Soon they will be here. Soon it will all be over!" Like a timid wife with a masterful husband, his so beautiful city could not bear up by herself. How those feet behind her scurried over the bridge when they heard the rumbles! Cowards! Bah! Let them go home and rummage in their wardrobes for the old white cockades!

A horseman in uniform was coming toward them. He dismounted by Claire, addressed her as if he knew her. Yes, it was he again, that youth about whom she had been so foolishly superstitious, and who had been born on the same day as Napoleon. "Youth," had she said?—he was that no longer—middle-aged now—but she would always think of him as young, because of the luminous glow of his features. There, Claire was bringing him to her.

"Does your Imperial Highness recognize an old Corsican visitor?"

"To be sure, Monsieur de Revillé. But why is an abbé in uniform?"

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“I do not quite know myself, except—”

“That his back is now against the wall?”

“Perhaps, your Imperial Highness—”

“Nay, for old time’s sake, call me ‘signora.’ ”

“Also, signora, because—well—what can one do but follow?”

“You did not criticize him then; you do not now.” She paused, “You are not like all the others.”

“There is so much to admire—”

“Nay, the truth, if you will, signor. Let it be harsh.”

“It is the truth, signora.”

“And you have settled, then, the old question—about the right road?—You may go, Claire and Laurette. Wait for me at the end of the bridge.”

“No, signora. Who can, to a definite conclusion? You ask for the truth. I do not know it. He slays his thousands. But he is a soldier. Should not a soldier expect his soldiers to engage in their business? He risks his own life a thousand times. To him it is no misfortune to die on the field of battle.

“He has drawn the sword; but he did not always draw it first. Even when he did, perhaps it was in defense of something. Something that began, way back in ’89, and which these monarchs of Europe hated. Some say that he has organized, regimented that out of existence. Very well; he has not killed the right of one to rise from the people and rule them so well. And it is that which these kings hate, this right more divine than that for which they fight.

“Also he fights for France, her right to soar high if she can, under his genius; to become rich and strong in

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the ways of peace. Ah! he has his case, signora. And his works will live long after he is gone.

“But what matters it so much what drives him on, whether ambition, love of contest, or the good he could do the world with his great genius, if the world would let him! I have seen him pause on the field of battle to wipe the mud and blood from the face of my friend; heard him, over another who had tried to betray him, say, ‘Would that he had not died before he knew that I had forgiven him!’ And I have felt the pressure of his hand, seen the flash of his eye! Once I questioned; now all I know is, I follow!

“I do not wait for Monsieur Moncey and his Guard,” he added with a smile. “Already I have pondered over the question too long and, since he needs every man, must be at his side.” Then he kissed her hand, saying, “God grant you many years of happiness, signora!” leaped into the saddle, and galloped up the river for the road that led north through Père Lachaise.

As the hoof-beats died away, the mutterings over those graves and windmills gave place to a louder thunder, over toward the north now, by St.-Denis, last resting-place of kings. And Madame Junot hurried from the end of the bridge, shivering noticeably in her weeds.

“Your Imperial Highness, all is over! Had you not better go?”

Basta! must she too echo the words of the cowards of this city!

Still, Laure was right. They would soon be here. Even now, from the grass-grown walls, over by Passy, watchers were scrambling down the slopes. You might stop the allies but not Destiny; no, no more than you could the

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river there from flowing on to the sea. And long ago she had forecast that Destiny. If she could help, she would stay. But she was an alien; Paris would not rise for her. And she was too old to fight. Yes, she must go, since they were all so determined, with the empress, the baby king, and all the kings of her family.

Her step unhurried, in the plain bonnet with the nodding flowers, she passed over the bridge.

At sunset they rode out of the southern gate.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Farewell to the Old Guard

THE young man on the bridge, with Letizia, had perhaps been guilty of sentimentalizing. It is a dangerous practice and sometimes spoils the portrait, since such a warm glow can soften too much a very stern and practical set of features. Still, it should be permitted two who had not been at all blind to his faults to see him that way. And sentiment can reveal the magic of a man, the reactions of others to him, which, after all, is as authentic history as ever can be recorded.

Napoleon, though, was too busy to sentimentalize over himself, except in the letters and commands which he shot back to the wavering ministers and the populace of Paris, and all for a purpose. He tried it, that very night, on Maret, Duke of Bassano, who had been his minister of foreign affairs, was now his private secretary, and had just come from Caulaincourt and Talleyrand, backed with urgent appeals for surrender on such terms as might then be got from the foe, which would tear away all the new kingdoms but leave France intact, that is, as she was under the Bourbons.

Maret had some difficulty in finding him. The emperor was usually quite neat about his person, though sometimes when engrossed he would wipe his pen on his nankeen

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breeches; and now it was hard to recognize the imperial features under the black stubble and powder patches. However, the gray military greatcoat, the short, almost squat figure, and the eyes, like pools, pools burning out of dark marshes, were a betrayal. And there he was, at an inn in a village somewhere in that ever-narrowing sector, across which, back and forth, day and night, he flung his weary men, bending over a table by the fireplace and setting up on a chart bright little pins covered with sealing-wax.

One could trace the course of battle by the pin-pricks. From the Vosges into Lorraine they ran, to Châlons, St.-Dizier, and Brienne—where, as he fought, he could look up and see the old school buildings, the tree under which he had wrestled with Tasso, and accordingly held off for twelve hours ten times his numbers—across to Montmirail, or Château-Thierry, then back to Troyes or Bar-sur-Aube, and so on through this little chevron-shaped sector between the Marne and the Seine.

The lines of these movements crisscrossed many times, puzzle-fashion; and they were not always in retreat. Sometimes there were steps forward, glorious victories, but the trend was ever backward. Lines, too, are cold ungraphic things that do not show the storming of a hill, the assault of an impregnable fortress, the dash southwest to save a river ford, or a forced march by night to support a marshal who could not do with as little sleep as his chief.

Nor between those lines could one read the continual vigilance, in weeks broken only by cat-naps under trees or in the saddle; the jests to cheer up tired generals; ringing speeches to frightened villagers; the pressure on

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cabinets for more men, more boats, more shells, more shoes ; the adroitly procrastinating letters suggesting new terms to the foe ; or the hundred exposures of the imperial person like any sergeant's. The flash of his genius could not illumine the chart as it had this fiercely fought sector. And never had it flamed brighter.

No, Maret, Duke of Bassano, did not see him as anything to sentimentalize about. And perhaps it is better for all not to see him that way, though there is a grand picturesqueness in ringing speeches, massed bayonets, bright uniforms, and strides into palaces. But there is, too, a spell in a marvelous engine at work ; an indefatigable industry, perfect functioning, and delight in the most arduous toil ; above all, in an incorrigible optimism that could still think only victory when one was battered and beaten, with his back against the wall.

As a matter of fact, Maret did not see him either way ; merely as a very stubborn man and an obstacle to peace. He was confirmed in this judgment when the emperor let him cool his heels for a while in the inn, then, looking up from those bright little pins which he must ever be setting backward, barked in mock irritation :

“You there, Maret ! What now ? More whining ?”

Maret, startled, recovered his aplomb, and made his plea.

“And you would have me sign a treaty like that ! Go back and tell your masters, the Prince of Benevento, the Prince of Parma, and the noble Dukes of Otranto and Parma, that I will not sign. Unparalleled disasters may have snatched from me my own conquests but never those made by the soldiers of France before me. I prefer to run the uttermost risks of war.”

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So Maret turned in, while his chief, after setting his pins, mounted his horse and rode swiftly off to bar Prince Schwarzenberg from Fontainebleau. Next morning, after a good night's sleep, the Duke of Bassano rode on to Paris, delivered to them this "I will not sign," and they in turn relayed it to the Prussian and Russian envoys. One among them was touched by admiration and pity.

"Will he persist in destroying himself?" he cried. "Is there no way to enlighten him? Will he stake his own and his son's fate on the last cannon?"

Napoleon would. So long had he gazed on the bright face of Victory that he could not recognize the features of Defeat, except as a chance caller who rendered the final arrival of Victory the more joyous. Just as the enemy was delivering his supposed eulogy, he dismounted, midway between his dash to head off Schwarzenberg and another to help the napping Marmont, and inscribed this letter to Cambacérès:

I see that instead of sustaining the empress you are discouraging her. What mean all these misereres in the churches and the forty-hour fasts and prayers? Are you going mad in Paris?

Another he scribbled on his little military iron bed—to Joseph:

"Pray for the Madonna of Victories to help us!" Then, so little did he ask for pity, "Louis, who is the saint, may promise her a lighted candle."

There were those who thought the jest not at all irreverent but rather magnificent. Here was no Job resigned under disasters, but one facing the heavens cheerfully obstinate and defiant.

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But the day came when all this obstinacy and defiance, all his study of little pins, dauntless hammer-strokes, that genius which never had flamed so brightly, could help him no more. With five—often seven—times his numbers against him, and all deployed into as many different corps, he was forever feeling in the dark. He was like a man whose house has been invaded by many foes, and who, sword and lamp in hand, must dash up and down stairs and into every chamber, knowing that in the end he must be overwhelmed in spite of his skill and valor.

At last he turned from one of his forays to find an enemy in his rear. It was years since that had happened, for not often do the lesser falcons pluck feathers from the eagle's tail.

He beat him off, but simultaneously with this last warning came news by courier that the allies had broken through in the west, had taken St.-Denis, were storming Montmartre. The empress and Joseph had gone; and in the morning Talleyrand and Fouché would pay him for all those lectures by throwing open the gates.

It was to Paris then that he must race. And leaving his troops to follow him by forced night march, he galloped on to thrust his arm alone in the bars. Killing a dozen good horses and wrecking a caleche, he arrived, with darkness, at Athis, eight and a half miles from the walls.

As he was changing horses again, a horseman rode up to the inn.

“Too late, Sire,” he said. “Paris is lost.”

“Fool! Nothing is too late. It is only that everywhere I am not they act stupidly. Hurry those horses!”

“But you do not understand,” persisted the weary general. “The allies are battering at the gates.”

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A little later the emperor reached a hill. A break in the trees gave a view of Paris. All the roofs and towers were dark; but the horizon flamed red. It was almost as Belliard had said. The watch-fires of the foe twinkled on Chaumont Hill, among the windmills of Montmartre and the new graves of Père Lachaise.

How often before he had been ringed round as Paris was now, only to break through! But Paris was not himself. She was beautiful, capricious, without steel. He must back to Fontainebleau, gather the remnants of his legions, sound the tocsin through every village of South France.

He turned his horses' heads, turned them from his beautiful city and, though he knew it not, forever from those paths of glory, except for one last futile ride. . . .

He arrived at dawn, hurried down the Gallery of Francis I, reached the door of his little room, locked himself in. Within the hour his door was besieged by generals—Druot, Bertrand, Ney, Macdonald, then Marmont, also Caulaincourt and Cambacérès, ministers of state; all knocking more peremptorily than ever they had dared before.

At last, after an hour's nap, the first in days, he opened the door himself, surprisingly refreshed, and began in his old way to pace up and down the room.

“Ah, gentlemen, I am glad to see you. The sun is up. It is a glorious reveille for France. We shall beat them yet.”

Indeed he seemed fairly bursting with schemes.

“Soult is at Bayonne; Suchet, Augereau, southwest. We shall send expresses—let them kill their horses—rally these divisions, meet them with the Guard, march on Paris, take it, then back over the Rhine we will go!”

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The wearied generals, most of them, like their commander, with powder blotches and many days' stubble on their chins, and the bathed and shaved councilors, looked at the pacing figure, then among themselves. They had come with demands for his abdication; and here he was talking of crossing the Rhine. He was hopeless.

A pause—once more they looked at each other. It was as though each said, “You tell him—or you—or you.”

“But, Sire,” at last spoke up the tall Macdonald, whom he had never much liked. “Augereau has surrendered at Lyons; Wellington has crushed Soult.”

“We shall repair to the north then, rally the Lorraine legions, Davoust and Rapp. Fortunately we left them in the Rhenish cities. It will be easier to retake Prussia.”

Macdonald had more news that should have reached the emperor but had reached Talleyrand or some one else instead: Davoust and Rapp had marched out. Napoleon turned in his tracks and faced them as though they too were his foes.

“Ah! We shall make the final appeal then to the people, sound the tocsin, rally the peasants as they did in '89, to fight for Liberty and France. *Hé!* You do not rise to that? Your faces are cold? I see. You are too old; with age grow faint of heart. It is the young men that are for me. In them the sacred fire has not burned out.”

“Would to God,” muttered one of the generals, “something would burn out or snap in you!” The wish was human. Napoleon had eaten his cake and now asked for it. He had wanted men of obedience; now he demanded free men.

Finally they managed, somehow, to tell him that the

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white cockades had bloomed once more and in profusion; that Paris had capitulated and declared Louis XVIII king. At this he railed. He might believe it, but he would not admit that he did.

So they spent the morning with that paper, made out with such a triumphant flourish by Talleyrand, still hidden in some one's pocket. At noon he dismissed them to dine alone. And still they baited him through messengers they wily sent in, with descriptions of events and tales of defections of those he had cared for.

The first emissary was quite brave. The allies entering Paris had made a valiant showing, Alexander at their head. Evidently the people enjoyed the parade. They had shouted *vives*, and there were bushels of cockades.

“Bah! There are turncoats in every platoon. France is still full of the brave.” And still he went on taking coffee.

Monsieur de Talleyrand had welcomed them in, was secretary of the new government.

“The Prince of Benevento, you mean. He may desert me but never the titles or fiefs I gave him. But since you are disposed to talk of the trivial, what of the sulker, Bourrienne?”

Bourrienne was the new postmaster-general.

“Ah! his thirty pieces of silver.” Still he went on with his coffee. “And I suppose he is talking others into going over to the foe.”

Yes, M. de Bourrienne had buttonholed Marshal Marmont, for one. Now Napoleon turned, his eye vigilant.

“And Marshal Marmont gave him the answer he deserved?”

No, unfortunately he hadn't. He and Mortier and Jour-

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dan had donned the white cockades, and Marmont had turned over his whole corps.

The cup too hastily set down drenched the whole table. "You lie! Send me some one who will tell me the truth."

The next envoy confirmed it. Napoleon ate no more.

"And they would not allow me even a decent period of mourning, the respect a relieved widow pays to a husband who has been in the way! But Marmont, one of the first I chose, who supped with me last night, spoke me fair, then to go out like Judas!"

All through the afternoon such news trickled in. Joseph and Louis and Jerome had flown; he took that calmly. He had expected it, though perhaps not their precipitation, which undoubtedly had disheartened Paris. And Maria Louisa? She had not shown herself the empress as Josephine would have done, cheering them all with her smiles, visiting the wounded. Josephine too would have come speeding to him, in coach and six, in spite of all the old misunderstandings.—He threw himself on a little yellow brocade sofa, relapsed in gloom.

Later it occurred to him to ask for Murat, and he rang for Roustan to summon Bertrand, who might give him news of Joachim and Eugène. Roustan did not appear. Roustan, faithful fellow, so Constant, who came in his stead, told him, had set out on foot that morning for Paris. Also Monsieur Corvisart had gone—Corvisart, his Luke, his beloved physician—and he with the old pain, like his father's, that had come in the night!

But *dame!* never mind. He had no need for doctors, only faithful soldiers and ministers. "Go, Constant, summon Messieurs les Généraux Druot, Bertrand—any rascally general you can find in uniform."

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Druot appeared. The news from Italy? Eugène was falling back.

“Eugène? But why? Come, do not hesitate. Tell me the worst.”

“The prince has indeed been faithful in your misfortune, Sire; but the king of Naples has made an alliance with your foes and is pressing Eugène hard.”

And now Napoleon’s face contracted with as violent a storm as Druot had ever seen on that face; and he had been much with the emperor.

“What! Murat!” he cried, in agony now. “Murat whom I have raised up; made a king, given a sister! And that sister has spurred him on!” Then, leaping from the little yellow sofa, he strode to the door, flung it open, and burst out on the astonished generals and councilors who were still wrangling over who should get him to sign.

“I see. Cabals at my very door. The parade of rats has begun; why do you not join them?”

He waved them in, then stood there, striving for self-control, which he had pretty much lost. He found it again, and his lips curved in a smile—the shadow of one that once had charmed but could not now.

“But perhaps,” he said softening, “I do you an injustice. You, Ney, Macdonald, Bertrand, Druot, have fought nobly. You, too, Caulaincourt, my friend, have served me early and late. Now you are weary, gentlemen; but a night’s rest will restore your judgment. In the morning your spirits will rise again with mine; and you will be the indomitable, the invincible of old.”

Macdonald suddenly grew harsh.

“Not a sword, Sire, will be raised in your behalf.”

Swiftly the blue-black eyes ran round the circle, too

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astonished for wrath, and pleading for loyal protests of dissent. Not a word was heard; and the silence told him the truth. Many times these past months he had seemed weary of body, no matter how he had spurred it on, but never weary of spirit. Now suddenly that spirit, too, seemed tired.

Nevertheless in a moment he broke out:

“Would that Desaix, Lannes, Duroc, were here, or any of the glorious heroes who have passed. Even the mad Junot would not have answered me thus. But they are gone, and there are left only traitor Marmonts, Mortiers, Victors, and you who, though you do not betray me, show the feebleness of women.”

He went to the window, looked down on White Horse Court, on his Guard.

“Still I have the faithful. They will never desert.” Again into the room: “But I see it is no use. I could not rest easy in defeat; but you want repose.” He surveyed the circle with one last melancholy glance. “I foresee what you cannot, that you will not rest so softly on your beds of down.”

He sat down at the table, stretched out his hand.

“In some one’s pocket is a paper—a paper you want me to sign. Hand it over. I will sleep over it. Now you may leave.”

“War! war!” sighed Caulaincourt, as they filed out. “Is he only made for war? Are all his magnificent qualities to resolve themselves into nothing but stubbornness in the end?”

No, they could not understand him. They had fought bravely and well, against overwhelming odds. And now he would whip them on. But then it is given to only one

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to have the most tireless energy, the most indomitable spirit in the world. His understanding was a little more keen than theirs. He had only been trying to see how far he could rouse them. He could not rouse them; they were too weary to go on.

Again that night he locked himself in, and once more was given over to that melancholy which at rare intervals attacked him so profoundly. And in the morning there was gossip among the valets and aides who had not deserted him. The emperor had been heard groaning in the night. A valet had entered, found him in great pain, and had discovered a little bag in which he carried an opiate, rarely used, empty by the fender. Ah, it must mean that the emperor had tried suicide!

But the valets understood him as little as had the generals. Save for a brief moment of depressed contemplation of such a way out, he was not, at bottom, sentimental or histrionic enough for such a gesture. He was the incorrigible optimist, the greatest the world has yet seen, too hopeful in catastrophe to admit defeat. In the morning his mind was made up. There was no way out. He must sign—and then—

He summoned them to the little room.

“Come, gentlemen, the little paper of Monsieur Talleyrand’s. *Merci, merci.* What have they allotted me? *Hé!* A little island—grain of sand compared to my old dominions. Well, we must make the best of that. But what have they given my family?—hm-m—they have been fair enough for treaty-breakers. There—” the pen scratched rapidly—“I sign for France.” He sprinkled sand. “It is done, gentlemen; now rest you well!”

Then all at once he became again the *enfant terrible* of

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Europe, threw himself down on the yellow brocade sofa and flung out at them:

“You are satisfied. I am not. But let them beware. I shall keep my word only so long as they keep theirs. Should they break one jot or tittle of that document, they will hear my bugles again.”

Secretly, as he lay on that little yellow sofa, he was hoping that they would break their word. But it was the moment now to say farewell, not to his family, his son, or his wife, but to those whom life had almost as closely entwined with his heart—the Old Guard.

They tried to hurry him to it, said that the Allied emissaries and his carriage were waiting. He became irritable again.

“What!” he exclaimed. “Am I to be regulated by the movements of the grand marshal’s watch! Perhaps I shall not go at all.”

His foes would not allow him grace for even this out-break of peevishness. He was, said they, rather boorish about it all, plainly showed that he had not been bred in a palace.

Still, he did not keep them waiting long. In a moment he composed himself and descended the stairs.

They were arranged in the Court of the White Horse between the gray château walls, in the old familiar formations—squares of furred calpacs, queer shapkas, and glittering casques; squares of green and white, blue and red, pink, and sky-blue and plum—all weary from many campaigns, but every aiguillette shining this morning, every plume washed white, each head-stall and cuirass burnished for the last review by their emperor.

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With his old rapid step he strode to his place at the head of the columns, faced them. Occasionally a horse pawed the stones, but not a soldier stirred. Each eye was grimly on him, but that was because, though they were warriors, they were also Latin, and each was striving hard to keep back the sobs.

Bravely his voice rang out. It was full of memories. In it they could hear the clash of arms, the call of trumpets, the echoes of a hundred battles in which those vibrant tones had urged them on.

“Soldiers of my Old Guard, I bid, you farewell. For twenty years I have traveled with you the roads to honor and glory. In these last days, as in those more prosperous, you have shown dauntless courage and faith. With hearts such as yours no cause could be finally lost. But to go on means endless strife and a civil war that would bring deeper sufferings to our dear France. Therefore I have sacrificed my own interests to those of our country. I depart; but you will still be here and continue to serve her. Her happiness and yours will still be the dearest wish of my heart.

“And do not regret my fate. I sought the bullets, for it would have been easier to die in battle. Still, I shall do what I can to follow the paths of honor. And, comrades, sometime I shall write the history of your own glorious exploits so that they may be recorded for all centuries to honor.

“Would that I could embrace each one; but—” he turned to the commander—“I embrace you all in the person of your general—” he kissed the folds of the standard—“and your eagles. Adieu, brave eagles! Adieu, my children! Adieu, brave comrades! Officers

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surround me once more. There—there—I can say no more. Adieu!"

When he had finished, the last phrases not so vibrant but trailing away, there was silence, broken only by sobs from under the plumes, agitated now; but none left their places. Rapidly he wheeled and left them, their faces still front, but their eyes following him to the gates—to the carriage—then he was gone.

Some said he was afraid on the way down. They would have liked to have had it so. It pleases the average to see the eagle turn craven. But he did not blanch. The Guards mistook his silence as he sat back in the coach. They could not see inside his head. He was sunk in apathy apparently, this incorrigible little man with the paunch, fat thighs, noble head, and somber brooding blue eyes. But he wasn't thinking so much of vengeance or bewailing lost glory. He was thinking of the Guard—his wife—his son whom he might not see again. And also he was planning, all the trip down, what he should do when he came back.

CHAPTER XXXV

The Death of Josephine

ALL the way down, then, to the port of St.-Raphael, these fine plans engrossed him. So engaged, he did not notice the shadowy figures that rode before, behind, beside him.

The postilion lashing the near horse of the leading pair through royalist villages, the squad of dragoons, Sir Neil Campbell, the British commissioner, watching him eagerly for signs of fear when the mobs encircled the coach crying, "*A bas Napoléon!*"—all these he could see, but not the others. Age, Weariness, Disease, Fate, they circled his coach to jeer, thrust their heads in under the drawn shades to mock at him, or climbed the seat to gibber in his ears. Resolutely he closed both ears and eyes to them, but still they followed the wheels whirling in the wrong direction; sat with him in the stern of the boat; climbed the ship's ladder; voyaged over the blue water that separated his old island home from his new island prison; and disembarked with him on the *quai*, only to steal through the walls, stalk the streets of the many-tiered town of Portoferraio; past the cathedral, the fortress at the top, and over the drawbridge of the cliff to a small two-storied stucco house, not even owned by himself but lent him by Pauline. There in a little yellow

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salon, with fading carpets, brightened only by the shine of the imperial plate, the gems of his sword of Austerlitz, and the miniature on his snuff-box, they sat themselves down with him on the wheezy sofa, the fiddle-backed chairs, as he turned pages of books he did not see and revolved plans in his head, which they were bent on spoiling.

The small circle of provincial ladies who came to gaze on him, his depleted staff—Bertrand, Druot, one or two others—his sister, Pauline, and his mother, who had come gladly to be with him, his little army of nine hundred and ninety-nine soldiers, did not notice these shadows.

They could not think of him as old at forty-five. But toil had been incessant since he was fifteen. If one day was not as a thousand years, at least thirty years of warring, intriguing, defying, and galloping up and down the world were equal to a thousand. And drains on the system, studies in malarial fortresses, cat-naps in the saddle and on the damp ground, shocks of battle, wounds to the body, hurts to the soul, can weaken, particularly when heredity has already left a taint despite all the prate of Monsieur le Docteur Corvisart, who deserted him, and all the English doctors who would tap him on the chest and pronounce him sound for the further laurels of the English generals who would beat him in the days of his fading glory.

There was another condition which none took into account. To have gone on outside the walls of Paris would have meant to have snapped. But to be stopped so suddenly in one's course, to be restricted to so narrow a stage after so grand a one, to engage for a twelvemonth in trivialities to relieve an exile's tedium, did not help forty-five plus that thousand years. The world goes by so

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swiftly when one is in prison; and when Fate opens the door, cat-and-mouse fashion, it is to plunge into new conditions for which one no longer has Youth's resource and *élan*. But old champions take no stock of wounds and drains on the system, so long as Imagination can still envisage victories. Absorbed in treacherous fancies, they do not foresee a failing body and strained mentality out of step with Imagination, not coördinating—lagging—falling behind—

There was one, however, to whom this prison sentence meant final release—a gentle lady up in Malmaison.

It all started with a cold, not long after the news came that he had reached Elba. At first Josephine did not mind the slight attack. She had caught it when lunching with the czar, the tall personable young autocrat whose manly figure was setting all the Parisiennes' hearts a-flutter. The lunch was not to give aid and comfort to the enemy. To make war was then the natural way of life, and foes made up rather easily after battle. Besides, no one ever cherished rancor after a meeting with the sweet Josephine. And it might mean that she could save Malmaison and her daughter's new title Duchess of St.-Leu, which Hortense had been given after Louis's desertion; also that a word in the young man's ear might ease a little the condition of the prisoner on Elba.

After the luncheon she had returned home, elated with her apparent success; and the excitement bred a chill, for she had been fading lately; and the chill in turn brought a rather ordinary sore throat. It did not yield to poultices, developing into a sort of quinsy, then something more serious—just what, the owlish chirurgeons, who came whirling in their cabriolets from Paris, could not

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say. Hortense had her own idea about it; so did her wan mother, who sat bolstered up in bed, breathing with difficulty, as she decided on the disposition of her francs and this and that trinket, or glanced wistfully out of the window on the green slopes or parks as gentle as her own disposition.

There her last years had been spent in a hushed and lovely twilight. Sometimes she wandered through the greenhouses, or walked through the orchards and parks to water her violets with tears. Again she would ride out in an open caleche, a little sunshade over her head, always gowned in the most exquisite taste, and an attractive though pathetic picture, to visit her children or a friend. And her charities were actually munificent. A goodly portion of the francs which Napoleon had generously allotted her went to her poorer neighbors of the Navarre country seat and the village of Rueil bordering on Malmaison. Best of all, she had the art of giving. Her beneficiaries valued quite as much as the francs the smile that seemed to come straight from the "good Josephine's" heart. And though she did not set up bright little pins on maps, like the emperor, she daily followed his course and constantly got out from her dainty escritoire those letters in which he told how he still suffered from the parting.

When the news of the abdication was brought by Isabey—Josephine always held her friends—she was all for going at once to Fontainebleau. Excitedly she pulled the bell-rope, sent servants scurrying hither and thither, and ordered out her carriage. Never since the memorable night of his return from Egypt had she shown so much activity. She would drive through Paris in a coach and eight;

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show the foe that one heart was still loyal to Napoleon; then sail happily into exile with him! But Hortense held her by the arm. With a new wife, it would not do at all.

Dawn brought more reason to the distracted lady; and she ordered the horses back to the stable. When word finally reached her that the new pretty wife had gone back to be with her father, already Napoleon was half-way down to Fréjus. She could not catch up with him; to go to Elba meant a scandal that would hurt his prospects, such as these were; and already there were enough libels about him floating up and down the world. No, it would not do, she had agreed with Hortense, then broke down on her shoulder, and from that day failed more visibly. Sore throat? Quinsy? Only fifty-three and no organic trouble. So the doctors said, but the heart was an organ, was it not? And it had troubled her ever since, the day when, dressed in white like Marie Antoinette, she had taken up the gold pen—ah! sharp as any knife—and then had ridden away without looking up—at him who stood glued to the windows of the Tuileries.

Merci, merci, messieurs les docteurs; but a patient sometimes knows better than her physicians. So, gasping a little for breath, she had kept on apportioning the francs of which she would have no more need and the trinkets spread out on the silk coverlet before her, sometimes being comforted by Hortense, sometimes comforting her, for they were by turns weak and strong, these two women.

Perhaps she might have fought and gotten well; but there was no fight left in this gentle lady. The will was finished within the week; then, instead of struggling, she commended her soul to God, listened to the abbé from

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the church of Rueil, and called her ladies-in-waiting and her children around her. The former she counseled, kissed, and dismissed forever, then turned as best she could on her pillow to the tall young Eugène, so like his mother, and the spirited Hortense, now grown mature and vivid.

Hortense had just taken unto herself a lover. For this mortal sin the mother did not chide her. No quarrels were ever one-sided, and Hortense had been hard to handle, but no one could live with a misanthrope and animated apothecary shop like Louis Bonaparte. Anyway, the liaison was something morganatic permitted to ex-queens, and remorse for such venial frailty in a woman craving for affection should come with death, not—she sighed—when one was still instinct with life. So very simply she thanked her daughter and the young man for their devotion and affection. Then, all unconsciously she composed her own epitaph.

“I can truthfully say,” she told the two—Eugène, his head buried in the silk coverlet, Hortense, standing bravely, her hand clasping her mother’s now so waxen pale and with only the ghost of the old olive in it—“that never have I caused an unhappy tear to fall.”

Few passengers awaiting the dark ferryman ever spoke with greater justification. And the pangs caused to a certain thin young general with tangled hair and eyes burning out of sallow features need not be held against her. He had been rather triumphant and set up; and the good God has designed the adorably feminine so that it may be kind to all the world with the exception of the one adorer. Perhaps it was good for him.

The statement she made as she lay spent on her pillows, with a little of wistful pride. But if the holy saints can

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show a spiritual vanity, surely it may be permitted a gentle and frail lady to cross the dark river sustained by so innocent a satisfaction.

The pathetic little boast over, she choked, gasped for breath, and died. Hortense closed the dark blue eyes from which all luster now had fled, and smoothed the chestnut tresses like a halo on the pillow. Three days later, those bells of Rueil which had caused her husband such disquiet when they sounded at dawn as a young princeling was tumbled into a hollow beside a dungeon, and saddened her when they pealed for a prince new-born, now tolled for Josephine but caused her no disquiet. Hortense and Eugène could not stand it in the church as the priest intoned the services, and took refuge in the churchyard, walking hand in hand among the ivy creeping over the old grave-stones. Later they erected a new tablet with this simple inscription:

EUGÈNE AND HORTENSE
TO
JOSEPHINE

So Josephine had her day, and when the ships bore the news over the blue waters to Elba, it occasioned Napoleon much grief. Still, when a man has been separated for five years from a first wife and has taken to himself a new one, to say nothing of begetting an only son, he cannot grieve at the time so poignantly. Besides, if one has constantly stifled emotion, directed the eyes unswervingly up the paths of glory, ignoring their inevitable end, and has been strained by incessant fatigue and so often hurt by friends' defections, he, in spite of so many admirable instincts, is too weary for overwhelming emotion. The

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time for gnawing regret may come later, when the new wife does not come back with the little son and one returns to earlier memories.

Meantime he whiled away these months with those trivialities. He rode the nineteen miles in length, six in breadth, of the island prison, visited the mines, superintended the planting of mulberry-trees and the grafting of the wild olive. And he made himself a flag. It had gold laurel leaves, gold wreaths, gold bees, and gold N's all over it, and very proudly it flaunted in the breeze as he hurried his shaggy hill-ponies up and down the cliffs.

Occasionally, too, he reviewed his Grand army of six hundred of the Old Guard, three hundred Corsicans, and ninety-nine Polish Lancers. And there was his navy. This consisted of one brig, two brown-sailed feluccas, and four rowboats, manned by the imposing total of twenty-four sailors. His cavalry also totaled twenty-four. These he carefully divided into eight brigades! Seven were made up of geldings and stallions; and there was one of three mules.

This last absurdity came partly from his flair for intensive organizations, which he had developed to a fetish partly because it engaged his fancy and fortified him to talk in the old terms. Some day, by his old magic, all these brigades of threes would be suddenly multiplied into the old proportions. And, too, to seem so content and happy over trivialities might throw his jailers off guard.

By such devices he hugged the shadow of former greatness and masked his purposes. And he even varied these with picnics on the shore with the prettiest of the Elban ladies. They displayed many ribbons and used their smiles. He played pretty games with them and sometimes slipped

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a cold fish in General Bertrand's pocket or down the white backs of the Elban ladies. Perhaps it suited him to have all think he had grown foolish; still, he had always loved practical jokes, and in these last diversions there was little of ulterior purpose.

Letizia and Pauline tried their best to give the exile a touch of family life. They would talk; Pauline would play the harp; and in the evening the three sat down to vingt-et-un or reversi. He was a tyro at chess and cards; but often they would let him win and say nothing about his tricks. Letizia would even pretend to be disgruntled and make a great to-do about losing, as he descended the stairs to his ground-floor apartment, crowing over them and calling out some last bantering reflection on their skill. In the morning, inevitably, he would steal up behind his mother, as she sat indoors or, when it was fair, shawled, on the terrace, staring at the northeast promontory of Corsica. There he would pour into her lap all his ill gotten winnings, sous and écus, for they played for small stakes these days.

It still disturbed Letizia that her son was called a "card-cheat" by his jailers, all, like Bourrienne, seeking to find the flaw. But that she herself was called a "parsimonious old woman" did not worry her in the least. Those specters she did not clearly see; but she could not get over the idea that all these kings might some day need bread. *Per Dio!* They were not so far from needing it now. And she conducted a most vigorous campaign against the French minister of the interior, who had offered her twenty-eight thousand louis for a house that had cost her thirty-two. She might be a deposed empress mother, she told him, but she would not abate one jot

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or tittle of her rights. Rather than give them up, she wrote, she would sue the whole French nation. She would have relished that suit too, for she had never been in sympathy with the French, never anything but thoroughly Corsican.

Still, in spite of all the gossip, they liked her on the island. She was sixty-four now, in good health; and when one was not awed by her august severity at receptions, and her occasional sharp tongue, she seemed a decidedly wholesome old lady of simple and gracious manners. And here on the island, where she was with her son more than at any time since he used to chase the old archdeacon's goats, she put on more flesh and had quite a nice color. She never said much in words to show her sympathy for her son in his misfortunes; the nearness was enough, and for the time she was quite happy.

Pauline, too, did all she could through dinners, levees, and flirtations to gain social relaxation for herself and her brother, for though so light-hearted a little lady, she was not without compassion. The Villa of the Windmills above the tiered town and the sea was in her name; but all she and her mother had, every brick and tile and écu, would be his the minute he asked for it. The enforced visit thus drew brother and sister closer together.

With Caroline and Eliza, over on the Italian mainland, he had no correspondence, and they never came. Still, so loath was he to cherish grudges, and most of all to consider any of the family really treacherous, that he actually came to overlook their betrayal. In this the mother was not one with him. The letters she sent the girls were so scathing as almost to be sufficient punishment for their crimes.

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The Countess Walewska showed her fidelity and bravery by coming all the way from Warsaw to Italy and then to the island in a little boat. *En route* they had quite a storm, and when she met him beyond the town, veiled so that the Elbans might think her the empress, the blue eyes shone, misted from tears and the spray, through her veil. Again to preserve the amenities or give color to the fiction about Maria Louisa, she refrained from visiting the Villa of the Windmills and repaired instead to a green valley between inland cliffs where a bel-fried hermitage stood just beyond a wayside cross. There she stayed for ten days, and he was grateful for the blue-eyed countess's affection; but being forty-five plus that thousand, he had much rather the empress had come, because of the boy.

She did not come. Swallowing his pride, he had written letters. But her father had made a very express wish that she should not leave Vienna. As he pointed out, here was a splendid opportunity for breaking a *mésalliance*, of wiping out that parvenu stain on the Hapsburg escutcheon. Her own wishes accorded with his. She was still plump, pink, and prettyish, but no longer so innocent of thought, having met Count Neipperg. The count had one eye, but was soldierly looking. And that one eye was good, as witness a long line of illustrious seductions. Naturally, too, a royal father preferred a high-born seduction to a low alliance. She did not answer any of the letters.

For his part, Napoleon pretended that the desertion did not hurt; even talked in the most beautifully detached way about his absence of feeling. This did not deceive his mother, from the very beginning; and a snuff-box at last gave him away.

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He was not addicted to the habit; yet he resorted to it frequently now, not applying the grains, but merely opening the lid and passing it before his nose; because, so she suspected, it gave him a pretext for looking at the miniature painted on it in delicate flesh-tints and pinks and blues. She was sure of her ground when he dropped it one day and sprang down on all fours by the wheezy-springed sofa. When he had picked it up, he examined it with the greatest concern, crying: "My poor darling! My little one!" The little face limned in those delicate tints was that of the King of Rome.

Yes, taking it altogether, every one said, particularly his English jailers, he should have been content on such a fine farm; and the existence would certainly have satisfied Joseph. But a squire and a conqueror can be begotten, one right after the other, in the same family; and Napoleon was not the squire. Such quiet pursuits and narrow confines did not please one who had regimented mighty armies and empires and ranged up and down the world. And he was now meditating the last act of his drama.

As the last month of winter dawdled by toward the spring of 1815, all these *divertissements* palled. He still kept up enough to mask his intentions, but relapsed more and more into reclining on the wheezy sofa in the yellow salon, idly turning the pages of books he did not read, revolving plans in his head, or staring at the ceiling. So absorbed, he did not once notice the specters gibbering at him from the fiddle-backed chairs.

But those shadows, none the less, had succeeded in thoroughly disorganizing his habits. He ate sometimes too sparingly, again a little too much of meats, and at ir-

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rational hours; would get up at three in the morning to call for coffee, then at three in the afternoon drowse on the sofa or suddenly fall asleep on the terrace over the yellow and white town and the blue sea. When he thus rested his mother would come and brush the flies away from him, and she noticed that his face would be turned toward the north, where, somewhere beyond the sea, lay France.

And though the eyes were closed she was suspicious that he was not asleep. No longer could he instantly sink into profound slumber which, though short, would refresh him thoroughly. Indeed, he had given himself over to a habit for which he had condemned his brothers. He was day-dreaming now. To be sure, he had told them that it was all right, provided one put solid foundations under the dreams. And so now he would have defended himself. But he had lost, without knowing it, much of his genius for fundamental construction. Nevertheless he was still a tolerably good mason of empires. And up in Paris, through proxies, he had been pretty busy of late with level and trowel.

That he was justified in any intrigue, he felt sure. The Allies had broken their promises, to his intense satisfaction. Even now they were talking of chaining him to a rock in the wild Atlantic. True, Talleyrand, his old minister, was the most eloquent advocate of the transfer; but all the kings and premiers were nodding assent.

In money matters, too, they had been dishonorable. The abdication papers had assured him two and a half million francs annually out of the French treasury. Ten months had gone, and he had received not one sou. The holes were growing larger in the worn carpets, on the

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yellow sofa; the yellow and scarlet facings of his green grenadier's coat were fading; General Bertrand's and Druot's uniforms were shiny at knees and elbows; and even the valets were grumbling for their back pay.

And all this while messengers, queer fellows in the guise of wine and oil sellers or monks, but looking neither itinerant nor canonical, came to see him. They told him all the news—how violets were blooming, not alone in Josephine's nook at Malmaison, but actually all over Paris. The ladies were wearing them, or dresses of their hue, while gentlemen everywhere had violet rings, cravats, and the flower embossed on their watches and chains. It was spring, of course, but that did not account for all the profusion. By a happy coincidence the violet was the Bonapartist symbol. And as the supporters of the Stuarts used to say at meals when Oliver ruled, "Heaven send this *crumb well* down!" or, "Over the water to Charlie!" so over coffee Parisians now would cry, "In the beautiful springtime comes resurrection!" or, as they passed at levees, "Are you fond of the violet, monsieur?" "*Mais oui, madame.* I am utterly devoted to it!"

Of course, these messengers may have overestimated the numbers through salesman's zeal, for the majority, except when thrilled by the magic of a conqueror appearing in person, do not care to return him to power. But at least Hortense and many of the old officers subordinate to the treacherous marshals had formed their cabals. Her violet eyes were doing yeoman's work; and the old veterans and all the young wanted him, the more particularly since the Bourbons were doing nothing but fling away gold. There were no more public works and improvements and consequent employment; gone were the

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buzz and pleasant hum of court, reviews, pageants, all the activity and splendor of the Consulate. Tyranny had come back without the compensating progress and glamour; and Sloth in the person of a fat Bourbon sat in the Palace of the Tuilleries. After all, it might be better to have a little man, also stout but with a brisk tread, vibrant voice, and commanding eye, putting up monuments, marshaling battalions, superintending roads, and issuing bulletins all over the place. These were the memories left with many; and they knew not of the gibbering specters.

These pictures and memories quite accorded with the plans in his head. On Ash Wednesday, therefore, he lost at reversi to Madame Mère and Pauline. Obviously his mind was not on the game, and, midway in a count, he threw down his cards and beckoned to his mother to follow him to the terrace where they might be out of ear-shot of allied spies.

Outside, Letizia thought she could smell the spring-time fragrance of Corsica wafted over the intervening waters. But her son was not looking at Corsica. He made a swift gesture toward the north instead.

“The die is cast, signora,” he said simply, but with a note of excited eagerness that did not escape her. “I sail to-morrow with the Guard.”

Had there been any observers there, they would have at once been struck with the resemblance of son to mother, not in feature but in sweeping vision, the eagle’s look, which no specters could ever quite dim. And now she too gazed toward the north, drawing herself up proudly in the moonlight. When she at last spoke, her advice was not what once it had been when she had tried to dissuade him

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from some rash enterprise. It was different now. His foes had made it a matter of honor.

“I would not have you rust here in idleness,” she said rapidly in her guttural and eloquent Italian. “I would rather with my own eyes see you perish by the sword than to refuse to fight for what your foes have wrested from you.” She paused sadly as if fearing she might be actually invoking his destruction; then, “Go, my son; and Our Lady of Victories, the God of righteous battles and honorable men, be with you!”

It was really her last admonition on earth to her son, for the next day there was no time for parting messages. Before sunset, Pauline’s little landau, drawn by two shaggy hill-ponies, and with its step so low that it suited her elegant indolence, drew up on the cliff-road before the Palace of Windmills. The three entered, with Generals Bertrand and Druot following on their horses, made the circuitous descent of the precipice to the shore where were assembled in solemn platoons his three hundred Corsicans, ninety-nine Polish Lancers, and the six hundred of the old Imperial Guard led by the faithful Cambronne.

He directed the embarking of the silent legions; there was one last embrace and a whispered, “You gave me a fortune; I saved it for you; send for it when you have need, my son”; and he was rowed to the brig. He climbed the ladder; halyards creaked through the blocks; the yards of the brig and the lateen spars of the two feluccas swung round; the sails bellied; and they came up into the wind and sailed for the invisible coast-line north.

His old dapple-gray Marengo pawed the deck in the waist; in the old military gray greatcoat, resurrected,

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his half-bellows hat tilted forward on his brow, the emperor stood on the quarter-deck. General Bertrand and the four specters stood with him. Letizia could see them clearly now. And he, the black sheep of Europe, leading his dauntless nine hundred and ninety-nine against Europe's hundred millions! Still, Letizia thought, if this should be the last act, never had an actor more magnificently faced the falling curtain.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Pauline Flirts to Gain Time for Her Brother

AFTER they climbed the cliffs, they paused on the terrace to watch the spars go down under the blue, then retired to pray that all might go well with him, and that Sir Neil, the British commissioner, who had been decoyed away from Portoferraio, might not return. The next afternoon Pauline heard the angry ring of spurs on the stones and turned to see Sir Neil, quite out of breath and very much flustered.

As though there were nothing at all in the wind, Pauline led the way into the yellow salon her brother had vacated. He began to put questions to her about that brother. She apologized for his absence, hinted his imminent return, then patted the vacant place on the faded brocade of the wheezy sofa with a most seductive invitation. Angrily he shook his head, but, since he did not want to use force on a pretty woman, sat down in one of the fiddle-backed chairs, trying to conduct his inquisition with the high-and-mighty courtesy that became a British officer: Where had her brother gone? Did she know that if he had left the island, he had violated his oath? That she herself would be jailed? But *had* he gone? The more he questioned the more teasingly she laughed and the redder he grew. Now she could scarcely conceal

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her mirth, his face and coat were such a lobster-like red and contrasted so ludicrously with the faded yellow furnishings.

All at once, seeing that he was about to leave, and knowing that he would at once send ships in pursuit, she stifled her giggles, rose and took a chair, sliding it close to his and sidling her foot across the carpet until it rested by his size-eleven military boot. Such a pretty little foot it was too; but he drew his away. Hers followed, and at the same time she laid a hand with the semblance of a caress on the gold facings of the lobster coat; and her little classic features and soft eyes became innocently confiding. "I have a confession to make," they as much as said; "and you, my lord, are the only man in all the world to whom I would make it, for I adore you and know you will be kind to my brother."

The red lips and soft hazel eyes and those so child-like classic features did the trick. Sir Neil by no means lost sight of his duty to God, king, and country; but now he could both make love and serve Old England. So when Letizia entered, now an august but harsh and disapproving figure, he did not remove the little hand. Indeed he did not hear Madame Mère, she entered so softly. And over his shoulder Paulette gave what might pass in a princess for a wink. Letizia, at least in this instance, could wholly trust her daughter, and disappeared; and Sir Neil turned triumphantly for that confession.

But he had been on such a long and tiresome journey! Pauline must give him some refreshment. His back turned, she seized a knife which Napoleon had left on the desk near the bell-rope, and almost severed that bell-rope so that when she pulled it forcibly it parted in her hand

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without any summoning jangle. Then she must go in search of servants, who somehow could not be found. Consequently there was further delay, then a host of apologies, "Such an ill run household; their fortunes had indeed run down!"—followed by a string of charming irrelevancies, and all accompanied, when he showed signs of a belated suspicion, by wistful looks which implored: "Oh, please, my lord, do not be brutal! First drink your wine; then I will be all you ask." Again it was: "You see, my dear one, I am a woman. Give me time, and I will confess in my own way."

So two hours passed; and at last the soft red lips uttered the most preposterous of cock-and-bull stories. He had sailed—yes, she must admit it, her lord was so forceful. But only for a little tour of the islands. Why had the Guard embarked? To get the fresh ocean air; they were languishing on the island. Where then had they sailed? To—she hesitated—Porto Longone. He gazed incredulous, showed signs of wrath. Then more sighs, glances down, stretchings of the little handkerchief, even tears; but she was at the end of her devices and at last burst out with a laugh that was almost a scream, "To see how they catch lobsters!" And with an oath the scarlet coat burst out of the room.

Later, after he had despatched his ships, Sir Neil reported Pauline's wilful conduct to the London periwigs. He reported it in brief. From the letter one would have thought that he had instantly seen through the ruse and stayed but a minute. The periwigs were quite naturally enraged. Certainly it was very reprehensible of Pauline thus to make love to a lordly British officer and not tell him all about her brother. So they gave the story to the

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world as a startling instance of the depravity of all who bore the name of Bonaparte.

Pauline, when she heard it, giggled and did not care. She had gained a precious two hours for her brother.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Flash of an Eye; Magic of a Name

THE little interlude of Pauline's was the last service on earth she could perform for her brother.

Meantime things were moving much more swiftly for Napoleon than they had for Sir Neil.

A thousand ships bore the news over the seas. Ten thousand riders and semaphores relayed it to hamlet and capital. And the hundred millions of Europe heard it and trembled. They shivered in their beds o' nights, on the streets by day peered furtively as if at any moment he might come striding round the corner; and in the high council-chambers the voices of the orators grew husky with rage and fear.

At inns and cross-roads, mobilization orders were tacked up, all over Europe; city gates were shut, watch-fires built along the coast, and a million men ordered under arms. The lion, the tiger, the man-eating shark, Europe's black sheep was loose—a little man of few inches and with a guard of nine hundred and ninety-nine; yet he threatened the whole world! So ring the bells, sound the tocsin, send out the mighty armies, and place a price on his head! A hundred thousand gold louis, a hundred thousand pounds sterling; to say nothing of rubles and thalers, duchies and principalities, to him who brings the beast in alive or dead! Treble it, if dead!

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The news came to Paris among other capitals, and set the whispers flying round attic eaves and palace cornices. To some they came like homing pigeons. Old sergeants polished their muskets, young officers their swords. Out from old coffers came the tricolor cockades, and white ones were dropped in the Seine; all behind the back of course as yet, and the drilling in secret gardens or with bolted doors.

To the slothful king these whispers, so swiftly growing to a tumultuous roar, did not come like homing pigeons; rather like black ravens flapping their wings and croaking from balustrade and statued niche. Still Napoleon's brave old marshals, Mortier, Marmont, Ney, Victor, Macdonald, Berthier, Augereau, Ney, Soult, reassured Louis, for most of the faithful were dead. "I shall bring him back in a cage, Sire," swore Ney. "Lodge him in a dungeon a hundred feet deep," promised Soult. Then they bowed, backed out of the divine presence, leaped into the saddle, and drove their legions out of the gates, south.

And still, through these swift-flying days, disturbing bulletins came in. The gray greatcoat, with the nine hundred and ninety-nine, was seen, now here, now there, ever stalking north. At the Golfe Jouan fishermen had cursed him; he had smiled once, and they proceeded to pile up stones to commemorate the spot. At Vizelle he had met the first huntsmen of the king. They had aimed their rifles at his heart. Swiftly at the head of his little band he had strode forward, called a cheery greeting. The rifles dropped; the huntsmen broke into frenzied cheers, then fell in behind.

At Grenoble, more huntsmen of the king. In formidable squares they blocked the highway. And now he bade

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his guardsmen halt and ground their arms. Then, alone, he advanced over the open space toward his foes, a solitary little figure and a splendid mark for the aiming rifles. To make it surer, he opened the folds of the gray coat, pointed at the Legion of Honor ribbon, a colorful bull's-eye over his heart. "Come, fire at your emperor!" he said. At once the road was choked with the legions striving to kiss his hand, the hem of his coat; then they too fell in behind. Even Ney, who had sworn to "bring the wild tiger back in a cage," when he heard the old vibrant call, "Bravest of the brave!" dropped his sword and ran into the wild tiger's arms. So it was; all the way north—the aiming rifles, the solitary figure, the cheery call, and the legions falling in behind. Like a swift-growing snowball, the gathering legions rallying round their emperor, rolled up the fair roads of France.

At last the sound of cheers, of pealing bells and opening gates, and the tread of those marching feet reached the Seine. And Paris, the eternally lovely, the faithful and fickle, the frail and the brave, like a wife awaiting a masterful husband who had charmed yet made her afraid, began once more to yield to his spell. Openly now the white cockades went by the board; and the guns and tricolor came out. When the old emperor reached the Palace of Fontainebleau, the roars were so great that Louis rose from his fire, rushed down the palace steps, entered his coach, and whipped his horses toward Ghent.

Altogether it was a joyous return. There was much acclaim and jubilation. Everywhere women's eyes danced, men's hearts leaped. The old magic came back; Life once more held a thrill. Still, the acclaim must not be considered as universal in France. The old soldiers and the very

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young, and the common people—all who loved action and drama—were beside themselves with joy. But in all those cities along the highways up which that snowball rolled, there might have been observed silent bystanders—shopkeepers, bankers, royalists, the bourgeois and the conservative who had no mind for more wars and conscriptions and who preferred pursuing their humdrum tasks, under a moth-eaten dynasty, to honor and glory and to setting France back in the van of the nations again. Also there ever hovered at his marching heels the four specters.

However, the cries of the emotional swallowed up the stutters of the timid, and hard on Louis's heels, he entered the Barrière du Nord, to find a city ablaze with light; bridges, squares, windows jammed; and the rue St.-Honoré and Carrousel a-swirl with such great human tides that his mounted *éclaireurs* could scarce open a line to the palace steps.

As he bowed right and left, the white flag of the Bourbons ran down the halyards, his own went up; and a hundred officers strove for the honor of carrying him on their shoulders up the grand staircase.

Hortense, vivid to-night, the chandeliers making a soft glory of her finely spun flaxen hair, her violet eyes shining, was at the head of the stairs. And Julie was with her. He was glad to see Julie, for her own sake and because it meant that Joseph was with him. There he stood, with Jerome; and, best of all, there was Lucien, spindle-shanks, spectacles, noble Greek coin profile, leaning over the rail. When his sun had shone so bright in its splendor, his brothers could not stand the fierce glare; but now, with the clouds, they were back, all but Louis. It was good to

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see them, almost a united family again; good to be at home once more.

Hortense was a good hostess. As temporary lady of this house of kings, she had set the *maîtres d'hôtel* at work. Chafing-dishes with alcohol lamps under them were keeping things warm for his hungry officers, who now sat down with him; and to add a triumphal zest to the meal, wine was brought from the Bourbon cellars, while the bread they ate had been set to rise, the night before, for the king.

There was accordingly much happy chatter, but after toasts Napoleon turned to Joseph.

"I saw Dr. Horan about the palace," he said. "If you can find him, bring him to the blue room."

To this he himself retired, to find it renovated by Hortense's swift fingers. She had been picking up the coats, braces, and wigs of the king, thrusting them in the arms of domestics to be burned; had replaced the old bust of Napoleon, portrayed studying maps, on the console table; and had arranged jonquils from the palace gardens around the room.

Shadows also entered with him, as he waited for the doctor; not only the four specters that had traveled with him overseas, but a more familiar spirit. Almost he could see it enter from the little door in the paneling that led to the *entresol* below.

But it was only the outer door that opened, and the doctor appeared with Joseph, whom Napoleon now signaled to retire.

"Ah, doctor!" he said, when they were alone; "I am glad to see you. You were very faithful, I am told, to the empress in her last illness."

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The physician bowed. "I did my best, Sire," he said.

"You shall be rewarded. What did you diagnose as the cause?"

"A throat affection, Sire, making further inroads on a constitution already weakened by grief."

"Grief!" The emperor paused. "Did she suffer much pain?"

"She was only a week, Sire. She suffered little actual pain."

"And she realized that the end was near—showed courage?"

"Yes, Sire. I am sure of it. A sign she made to me before the end, when she could no longer speak, assured me of that. She faced the end without fear."

"Ah! she would." He rose from the console-table, approached him in the old way he had when about to solicit or give a confidence. "A moment ago, doctor, you said she died from grief. Have you any idea of the cause of that grief?"

Monsieur Horan was something of a reader of men, but it took no unusual keenness to read the emperor then. Hortense, thinking the room empty, had reentered unnoticed, and had meant to retire, but catching the question, paused, with her hand on the door-knob, to hear the physician give the conqueror the answer he craved.

"The cause, Sire, if I may be permitted to say it—"

"Yes, yes, you are permitted; be frank!" hurriedly came from Napoleon.

"It was, Sire," said the other looking discreetly down, "sorrow at your misfortunes." Over the emperor's face came a look of commingled sadness and triumph.

"Ah—ah! Josephine, my true Josephine! She was a

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good, a wonderful woman! Now you may go, Monsieur Horan. Soon you shall receive your reward.—Do not retire, Hortense. I wish to talk with you."

The physician gone, the two remained for a moment without speech, he sitting by the console table, gazing at the little door, she rearranging the jonquils, to hide her emotions.

They were a congenial pair. He loved Hortense, not in the way of the foul stories, but as a brother older by fourteen years, or any man so much older, may love a young woman suddenly grown so vivid and mature, without any thought of possession, only pleasure in her companionship and gratitude for her affection and faith.

She, on her part, had never held it against him that he had parted from her mother. Kings could not always be choosers, and it was not the heart's action, she knew. And she felt a profound admiration for his strength and a deep gratitude and love for all he had done for her and her brother, her cousins and uncles, in fact, all who had been of her blood. There had been no call or demand for any such generosity.

Despite that difference in ages, she would have made an excellent wife for him but the thought never entered their heads; and now, seeing him so sunk in melancholy, she cast about for some means to ease his hurt and remorse. She must corroborate the doctor's statement.

"What Monsieur Horan said was true," she began, as she trifled with the jonquils no more glorious than her hair. "Her thought was ever of you. She treasured your letters, followed your movements, and would have flown to you to share your exile. Indeed she pictured herself driving for Fontainebleau through Paris in a coach and

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eight to defy your foes and show her devotion. Only the thought that it might injure you kept her at home."

But she must not rub on a raw nerve. And suddenly, as she thrust in the last flower, she discovered a fleur-de-lis ornament pasted on the walls and rather loose.

"See, Sire," she called. "Only papier-mâché; cheap like the Bourbons, and very impermanent!"

Under her finger-nail it snapped off.

"Look again! The golden bee underneath. Yours, Sire. It is a happy omen!"

So she tried to dispel the shadows, for one must not dwell too long with such, or brood in melancholy triumph at the news of the death of a lady who seemed to have loved him, and really had in the end. There was work to be done—more than ever before; and the time was short. He had left Portoferraio on the twenty-sixth of February, and already it was the twentieth of March. The twentieth? His son's birthday! Oh, that he could see the little fellow! He had kicked and fought, so Letizia had reported, at leaving the palace, crying, "Now that my father is not here, I am the master!" And he only three years old, true fighting-cock and king! But never would his childish laughter ring through these walls unless the father conquered once more and brought him back. And he wanted peace. But would they leave him in peace? No, they had proscribed him as a wild beast and outlaw, placed a price on his head. Already the legions of all the kings were hurrying toward his borders; five precious weeks had been used in rolling the snowball up, and he could not allow more than three months at most before he overthrew them in battle.

But first there were new cabinets to be formed, a con-

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stitution framed, new armies raised, factories and foundries set at work, and gold to be gathered. For the Bourbons had given wings to the gold in the treasury, let the foundries rust, dispersed the troops, and dismantled the batteries. Everything was run down. It was like coming back to an old establishment to find the looms half idle, desks half empty, the familiar faces gone, and the new ones used to idle ways.

The new constitution wasted more precious days. It must be less drastic, "more liberal" than the old. A foolish idea, of course, but there were so many factions to please, and the Jacobins had once more come to the front. Therefore he must give this sop and that to win ideologues, constitutionalists, fanatics, traitors; and he must avail himself of any kind of cement he found to hastily patch up the national structure now so badly shaken. The result naturally was a makeshift and a very poor substitute for the old one he had drafted in the Consulate and which centralized the power in his capable hands. He was better fitted to be master of men than a public servant; and the change in rôles unsettled him, hurt his pride, and, though he maintained much of the old incorrigible optimism, left him not quite so sure of the outcome of those battles ahead.

And he had much trouble in his choice of ministers. The keenest minds had fled. He had distrusted Talleyrand and his crowd, but he liked to have familiar rather than new faces around him, and he realized now how much he had come to rely on the ability of those renegades. And Maret, Duke of Bassano, Caulaincourt, and such counselors as were left him had not got over the abdication. Sometimes they spoke as if he were quite fallible now.

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The only consolation he had was that Lucien was back and, though they refused to elect him president of the lower chamber, could watch and perhaps manipulate things there.

As for his new armies, so hastily conscripted, they lacked stores, ordnance, morale. To raise them before had been sometimes a mere matter of months; but then he had a going system. And so many of the old warriors now nourished the Italian roses, the poppies of the Central European valleys, the wheat of Russia. Fine seasoned battalions were left, but these had to be scattered piecemeal through new regiments and lose their integrity, while the new recruits were not nearly such fine, strong-backed boys as before.

On June 1, with twenty precious days left of his estimated four months, he reviewed his troops. The uniforms were poorer in fabric, but color and accoutrement were as bright as ever. There still were veterans with worshiping faces, bronzed under their shining casques, little boys with adoring eyes bent upon him. And the platoons marched by with much of the old straightness of line, some show of spirit, and heartening *vives*. Still, it was not quite like the old days. Something was missing, in *élan* or efficiency, he could not lay his finger upon it. Never mind; he would mold them under fire, himself supply the spark.

The keen eyes of Hortense, who sat in the bevy of ladies whose ranks were not so depleted as those of his marshals, noted his face as he sat his gray Marengo. She wondered if he could supply the spark. Certainly he had, and magnificently, on the way up from Golfe Jouan. Outwardly he looked much the same, a little paler perhaps, and stouter. But that did not matter so much.

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What worried her was that while he once had seemed all nerves held in iron control, now his stillness suggested lethargy of the body; and as he bent over his saddle a little, scanning the marching columns with a too anxious scrutiny, his mouth sometimes worked at the corners.

As these days passed so swiftly, he became, if not more sensible of those specters, sensible at least of bodily handicaps. He had accomplished what would have been held as marvels in any other man, but no marvels for Napoleon. Now he must surpass himself, and he could not do as much as before. His habits were badly disorganized; he could not fall asleep so readily or refresh himself by cat-naps; and he was continually getting up in the night to ring for coffee, pace the floor, and take snuff. These signs he had not recognized at Elba, where they did not matter; but they troubled him now. Once these night-watches had been filled with concrete plans; too often now they were marked with uncertainties, vague dreams like any poet's, which he must dismiss with the morning light as utterly impractical.

During the days, too, sometimes he would start, thinking he heard the click of billiard-balls or Josephine's laughter in the *entresol*. Once or twice he actually opened the door that led below to go to her; again, at midnight, he found himself in the unused passageway, headed for the gardens, where he had dreamed he found her picking violets in the borders.

The continuing pain mystified him and the doctors—the old ischury perhaps, a trouble of the bladder, if nothing worse—like his father's. Not too violent to endure, but weakening; and it was a distinct annoyance at

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the beginning of a campaign to find that he could not sit any length of time comfortably on a horse.

Still, except in odd moments, he refused to admit the existence of any of these handicaps. And as news of the foe's march on his borders reached him, he became fairly happy. The primary qualities with which a man has been endowed are the first to assert themselves, the last to fail him. He had been organizer, orator, lawgiver, diplomat, statesman, builder and emperor; but he had been born, and was still, preëminently the soldier. And now that he could put behind him for a while all these parliamentary problems which, these months, he had not handled with his old adroitness, something of his former confidence was re-born. His body might fail; but the conqueror's vision was still keen. In the field he would redeem himself. At least, he so reassured himself, as do all the old champions.

On June 14 of this year of 1815, his traveling carriage was brought from the palace dependencies to the courtyard of the Tuileries. It was equipped with changes of uniform and linen, portfolios of papers, dressing and shaving cases, maps, salts, lotions, sweet-oils, pistols, books, and his gem-hilted sword of Austerlitz. The army had started ahead. It was not the old army in either spirit or numbers. Four hundred and seventy thousand men had been levied, but only a hundred and twenty thousand were ready for the field. And there was a dearth of able commanders. Of the faithful, Prince Eugène was held at Vienna; Masséna was too old for service; and Muiron, Desaix, Stengel, Kléber, Leclerc, Joubert, Saint-Hilaire, Lasalle, Lannes, Junot, Bessières, and Duroc had passed on. Of the competent who had betrayed him, Bernadotte was fighting with his foes; Moreau had been slain; Auger-

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reau, Oudinot, and Saint-Cyr sulked on their farms; Victor lived with King Louis at Ghent; Mortier complained of sciatica; while Berthier, his chief of staff, had flown to Bamberg, there in a fit of remorse to jump from a window and dash his brains out. Never had commander sustained such losses.

There were thus left Murat, in whom the ass half had swallowed up the hero, Soult and Ney, who had gone out to cage him, and Davoust, Rapp, and Suchet. In the absence of other material, Soult now had to be taken from field service and made chief of staff, Davoust minister of war, reducing his roster of experienced leaders to but four—the wild Ney, the cool Rapp, the blustering Vandamme, and the merely adequate Suchet; and Rapp had to be sent to Strasbourg, Suchet to Lyons, leaving two for the critical campaign on the Flemish border. Even more significant was the fact that there were with him now not one of his young men whom he had singled out to follow with him the paths of glory.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Better Play with the Lion's Cubs than the Old Lion Dying

THE roads ran white as they do still through the fair North France and Flemish country—roads of many ages, of Louis the Sun King, the dazzling Francis, Charles the Bold, of the Franks, imperial Rome, and the Gauls and Belgæ before them. Over the green shoulders of hills they curved; through valleys yellow with grain and flecked with the poppies' crimson; under rows of statuesque poplars; across ancient arched bridges; by osier-lined streams, fields where hobnailed peasants were haying, tow-paths where women pulled on ropes like beasts of burden; past whirling windmills, ponds, flocks of geese, sweet-breathed kine, heavy-hocked geldings, heavy-hubbed tumbrils; and many a hamlet of little white, hip-roofed houses and châteaux buried deep in elm and beech.

In and out, up and down, they wandered, and over them marched the bright battalions of foot and horse, scouts and artillery, while in the van ever whirled the emperor's carriage. His flight must now be swift, his onset sure, for the odds were heavy. A quarter-million Austrians and a hundred and eighty thousand Russians were marching on

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Lorraine; fifty thousand Austrians and Sardinians had struck across Switzerland; while just over the hills, and a little to the west and north of him, lay Wellington with eighty thousand English, Scotch, Belgians, Dutch, Saxe-Weimarites, Brunswickers, and Hanoverians; and, due north, Blücher plodded on with a hundred and twenty thousand Prussians. Three quarters of a million all told, with others mobilizing; and he had, with Rapp's and Suchet's detachments, not much more than a fifth of that number. But there was a way out, the old way, with brilliant thrust and hammer-stroke to beat them separately before they could unite and crush him.

All had begun well, so far as his immediate moves were concerned; but already his commanders were bungling badly. Still, he had beaten Blücher, the day before, and now was driving the Prussians before him. Just over the rise of ground ahead was Grouchy's corps, which had caught up with the retreating Prussians. He himself was bringing up the center. And over the hills, a little to the west, Ney, with the left wing, was driving up a parallel road toward Quatre-Bras to attack Wellington while establishing a liaison with the center at the cross-road.

Over the rise of ground ahead he heard the crackle of musketry. A little cloud of dust whirled down the road toward him, and from it an *éclaireur* emerged, reporting that the Prussians were intrenched, over the rise, in force; that Grouchy was holding them. Again, from beyond the hills to the west, he heard cannon rumbles; Ney must be engaged at Quatre-Bras, though he had failed to effect a junction at the cross-road, as scheduled; and the two wings should be in touch with each other.

Over the hill in front he now hurried his legions, to

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see, when they gained the rounded ridge, Blücher's grays and greens covering the entire hillside opposite, from the gables of the town of St.-Amand to the little town of Ligny and an osier-lined brook which cut across the valley.

By a windmill he halted the carriage, deployed his troops until the fields were filled with color and movement as at some vast hunt in which many counties were engaged; then he ascended the windmill and came out on a little platform by the whirling *sajls*. It was noon; and on the opposite ridge he could see a knot of officers, one on a white horse—the high command, he was sure, but his glass did not reveal the features of Wellington, who had galloped over from Quatre-Bras, whence came the rumbles of the unseen cannon, to confer with the old Prussian marshal. Soon the knot dissolved and the white horse galloped west.

But what had happened to Gérard's division? Already he was several hours late. His new chief of staff was blundering; all the new ones were blundering; and nobody was on time.

For hours he waited on the platform, surveying the south and southwest and awaiting Gérard. At last, however, a cloud of dust told the arrival of the missing division; he descended from the windmill, mounted the gray Marengo, and rode along the lines. The cheers were loud; not so resonant, perhaps, as at former battles, but impressive enough to all the recruits whose memories could not go back to Austerlitz or Jena.

And now down the hill went Vandamme's and Gérard's foot, over the osier-lined brook, and through St.-Amand and Ligny. Among the osiers and the gables the tide of

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battle ebbed and flowed ; but tenaciously the French blues and red hung on, bit into the gray-green lines, until Milhaud's cuirassiers plunged down and drove the foe up the slope. It was the time for the grand charge, and Napoleon turned to order in Lobau's guards when an aide touched him on the arm, pointing up the valley to low hills four miles away on the west. There troops of horsemen and foot rode up, then stood there, massed on the sky-line. Another of Blücher's corps to hit them flankwise, or Ney or d'Erlon who should have come long ago? Surely they could not be French, for why should they hesitate, like spectators watching a battle from that safe distance?

Immediately he despatched an aide to reconnoiter, and meantime held back his reserves from the critical charge. He could not send them in with that threat on the sky-line ; and for fully a half-hour the strange columns stood there, like phantom horsemen, then wheeled and disappeared as mysteriously as they had come, and the more ghostly because of the thunder-clouds that suddenly swept up out of the west to envelop the whole valley. Even the forces of nature now seemed against him.

Nevertheless he now ordered in the reserves, which charged down the slope and up the opposite one, to be swallowed in the commingled cloud and cannon-smoke. As a spectacle it was magnificent, with the guns on the earth, the artillery above with their mightier salvos, the great golden flashes splitting the whole north, and the punier orange stabs from the tiny forms below. Those flashes too revealed the gray-greens falling back in safety against the thunder-clouds of like hue. The Prussian rear-guard was engaged, but the main columns had escaped to north or east ; he could not tell which. That apparition

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had cost him dear. A half-hour earlier, and before the storm, he might have captured thousands of prisoners and succeeded in breaking Blücher.

To increase his wrath and dismay, the aide now rode up and informed him that the troops on the hill had been no apparitions but flesh-and-blood French, d'Erlon's men, who had come on to support him, then, overtaken on that hill by a courier from Ney, had hesitated, at last had decided to support Ney and ignore the emperor, and so had retraced their steps, too late to support either.

Now the emperor's face resembled the elements fighting above. God! what *bêtise!* And, later, scouts and vedettes brought in news of other stupidities. Ney had confronted a thin English line, but had been misled into thinking it the whole English army. He had scarcely struck a blow—Ney, the mad, the wild, “the bravest of the brave!” And a general and part of the staff had deserted to the Prussians. Furthermore Soult was proving himself no Berthier. He was confusing orders. Corps were wandering around in the dark, divisions coming up hours late, and supply trains. Others were on the wrong roads, munitions were being shipped to the wrong points, and his soldiers had only half-rations of food and ammunition. Nothing co-ordinated, and now Fortune too was against him. He had struck brilliantly two days running, in spite of lost corps, green troops, and wavering generals; but just when he had the foe in his grasp, apparitions and thunderstorms arrived to snatch victory from him.

In his concern over the whims of fortune, there was something he perhaps overlooked. Brilliantly as he had struck, he had himself hesitated once or twice, where before he would have charged and charged in-

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stantly. And he could not keep in mind, as he had of old, every detail of the field, every unit of the army. The body of the army was not coördinating; but the head of that body was not thinking quite so quickly, comprehensively, decisively as once it had.

He gave proof of this deterioration when he sent for Marshal Grouchy and repaired to his carriage. The caution was in itself significant. Once he would have saved time by galloping to meet his marshal, but eighteen hours on horseback had caused him agony. Still, as the drenched, red-bespattered columns passed him on the way to their night bivouacs and meager suppers, their cheers were spirited enough, and their gallantry restored his humor.

“Blücher,” he said pleasantly enough to Grouchy, who now galloped up, “will undoubtedly retreat eastward. Follow him at dawn on the Namur road and report to me in the morning.”

Grouchy looked at his chief a little in bewilderment. He was a fair officer of chasseurs, but as a corps commander new and untried. Possibly he was looking in his chief’s face for that fire which he well remembered and did not find it. Once too the blue-black eyes would have studied his lieutenant’s face searchingly, found it wanting, then instilled some of that fire, or sent another in pursuit. And formerly he would not have given such vague directions; he would have supplied details, and, above all, not hazarded a wild guess as to his foe’s course. And that foe was *not* heading eastward; they were marching west to join Wellington!

That night he did not forget his wounded; in spite of his weariness he toured the field to cheer them and see

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that they were cared for. But when he once turned in, he slept too long. He needed the rest, it was true, and rose refreshed; but it was no time for rest. And in the morning, instead of pressing the pursuit, he lost considerable time in discussing Fouché and the new Jacobin ministers—what he should do, in short, when he returned victoriously to Paris.

During this strange interview, which took place on yesterday's field, among the corpses, the generals glanced uneasily at each other. Under no circumstances would these marshals have been sure of themselves; now they were not sure of their commander. Hourly the uncertainty spread.

About eleven in the morning he ordered his center to march toward Ney and Quatre-Bras, on the road that ran towards Brussels and which passed through the forest of Soignes and a little village called Waterloo. Arriving at Quatre-Bras, he found other things to concern him. Ney, who should have arrived at that cross-road the day before, effected a junction with his own center, and completed the rout of the Prussians, had not even held the English. They had slipped away in the night; and when, marching after them up the Brussels road, with the shadows of evening he came to the Caillou farm, he found the allies rather strongly intrenched on a ridge on the other side of a rather easily defended valley.

While his room in the farm-house was being prepared, he caught some more sleep on a bundle of straw under a pear-tree which partially protected him from the down-pour. When his room was finally ready, his man, Ali, could hardly get his boots off, so soaked were they; and his round hat, shaped like a half-bellows, a conch-shell,

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or a double candle-shield, the larger flare behind, was so swollen that it had constricted his forehead and left a red welt around it.

At 1:30 he was up again; drinking coffee boiled at the farm-house fire. Then he put on a fresh pair of boots from the traveling-carriage, and strode forward through the rain and the darkness to his outposts. Bertrand, grand marshal of the court, Chief of Staff Soult, Count Flahaut, Hortense's morganatic lover, Cambronne, commander of the Old Guard, General Lefebvre-Desnoettes, and Gudin, an aide-de-camp, accompanied him. He was weary, but sometimes he strode ahead so fast through the driving rain lances that it was with difficulty that they kept up with him. But that was the trouble lately; his bursts of energy were too spasmodic.

The reconnaissance was of little value. All that could be seen was the line of feeble bivouac fires on the upswell opposite and the phantom figures of his own men, still drenched and sleeping in the open with their heads on the hard knapsacks. When the rain slackened a little and its drone died down, they could hear the thud-thud of hammers, a mile up the valley. The enemy were driving loop holes through the walls of the château of Hougomont and the farm-house directly opposite. At least Wellington had not escaped.

"The elements, too, seem against him," said Soult as they followed him back through the rain lances. "He depends on his batteries and cavalry movements, and the fields are quagmires."

"There are more than the elements bent on his ruin," observed Bertrand to Cambronne as Soult hurried to catch up with their chief. "There are Europe and the

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army and himself. The army is not the old army, and he is not Napoleon."

"*Dame!*" said the intrepid Cambronne. "Notice when he speaks. He has all the old confidence."

"That is assumed," the other returned. "If not, he does not know the old fire has burnd out. Did you hear how he spoke to Grouchy last night? He gave a vague wave of his hand, said nothing definite, and trusted all to the incompetent Grouchy. Why, he talked like some feeble college professor too tired to go on with his lecture, not the conqueror of Austerlitz. Would the old emperor, do you think, sleep so late as he did this morning, then prate of politics while Blücher escaped? Would the man of Marengo let traitors slip over to the foe, Gérard arrive late, Ney hesitate, Soult blunder, d'Erlon march back and forth as though on a parade-ground, and all the supplies go wrong? I know what you would suggest—that France is not the same. Still, the leader of old would have forestalled mistakes, prepared everything in advance, lashed out before these blunderers so that every one would be afraid to blunder again, and infused even this poor army with some of his own decisiveness and spirit. Now he is merely going through the motions.

"I talked with a captured English officer to-day," he went on sadly, as he stumbled over one of the corpse-like figures on the knapsacks; "and they still fear him and consider him the arch-fiend of the world. They are fine soldiers too, Cambronne; and if they beat him, as they may with the odds, they will boast that Wellington and Blücher are his peers. But they will not be beating the man that was."

Cambronne peered through the gloom in astonishment.

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This grand marshal of the court was slender, good-looking, brave; and none had been more faithful to Napoleon. "The devil!" the leader of the Old Guard thought, "it is that new Irish wife of his, which Napoleon wished on him. She has drenched him with her own Celtic melancholy." Aloud he said:

"Is this the way to talk, Monsieur le Maréchal? The rain has chilled your spirit. It should not be for a soldier to forecast anything but victory. Let your elements and Europe do what they will. Of one thing I am sure, monsieur; the Old Guard will die, but never surrender!"

"You misjudge me," returned the other. "To feel alarm is not to yield to it. I will fight the more desperately in the morning. But I have seen ghosts—" he paused as they threaded their way through the dark woods—"the ghosts of Duroc, Junot, the Lion-Heart, all the old marshals. They rode through the clouds, over the ground, the battle-field, everywhere I went. And they seemed very sad, always were shaking their heads."

Back at the farm-house Napoleon again slept rather late, with a battle in prospect. At eight in the morning, he went on a second tour of his outposts, while his traveling-carriage followed to a farm-house on a slight rise in the south center of the valley, which now became his headquarters.

From here he surveyed the stage before commencing operations. It had narrowed now and promised an even intenser struggle than that on the former wide front. Between the extreme tips of the two armies lay only two miles of saucer-shaped valley, the green of fields and occasional wood copses silvered by the rain now turned to a drizzle. The ground opposite rolled gently up to a ridge

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not more than sixty feet in height and half a mile away from him ; and on this the allied front line curved in a bow, the bow-side away from him, with its right buried in the orchards and château of Hougmont, to the west ; its center strewn along the ridge ; and the left, east, by the half-dozen roofs of Papelotte and the wood of St.-Lambert. The troops were not entirely visible ; they burrowed low ; but he could occasionally see the black eagles on the gold crests of the duke's Foot-Guards, gigantic fellows, moving about in the orchards of the château, which they were still chiseling for defense, and an occasional Dutch kepi, Hanover horn-hat, and Scotch plaid on the ridge, or the red shoulders of some English officer, looking down on him through his glasses. There, too, horses were wheeling up the batteries. Behind the ridge he could not see how many legions were massed under cover of the forest.

South stretched his own troops, from a little wood in front of the Château Hougmont to the cluster of roofs, three windmills and one steeple, which made up the village of Planchenoit, in the southeast corner of his stage. On this southern rise they were deployed in battalions, ranging back to the edge of the saucer, not in battle formation yet, but the men of each unit—cuirassiers, *éclaireurs*, grenadiers, chasseurs, mounted and foot, loosely gathered together, as they saddled their horses, lay in the grass or corn, or bent over the breakfast fires and meager rations. In the intervals between were his batteries.

With Grouchy gone, he had almost seventy thousand ; the duke, eighty ; but he was to attack, the duke only to defend, those loopholed walls and the intrenched ridge. To the staff around his gray Marengo, it was a case of

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three to one, if Blücher's hundred odd thousand arrived; two to one, if Grouchy came on—odds, they thought, altogether too heavy for assaulting forces; and Grouchy was not to be relied on.

Their chief, however, seemed more confident. He was refreshed by a good night's sleep, and it was altogether inconceivable to him, in spite of all the misadventures, that a hero who had soared to victory on a hundred fields in the face of overwhelming odds and disasters should be beaten on this one. Grouchy, he assured them, would surely arrive or, at the worst, hold Blücher off. And his generals might have believed him, had they detected the old nervous energy and fire. Too long had they been accustomed to light their souls at his. This morning they could not; and they thought of the Bourbons and feared for their necks.

They grew even more restive as four hours passed, the rain ceased, the sun came out, and still Napoleon did not strike. His calm now seemed based on what he had done, not what he was going to do; fatalistic like that of one dwelling in a fool's paradise; and as dire in its results as the fascinated paralysis induced by a snake before it strikes.

At last, however, he looked at his watch. A quarter to twelve, and no sign of Grouchy. He could wait no longer; and, turning in his saddle, he sent off La Bédoyère and Lallemand to order Reille's foot to take the wood to the west which guarded the château; Kellermann's howitzers to send over a covering barrage. To give it a family touch, Jerome was to lead the first attacking columns.

After the guns had broken loose and sent the echoes flying up the valley, he anxiously watched Jerome. Too

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often, as soldiers, his brothers had failed him. But Jerome was doing well, leading his men against those gold casques with the black eagles, through the aisles of the wood to the orchard. Then he did all too well. He had been ordered simply to hold that wood. Instead, anxious to distinguish himself, he dashed into the orchard, engaged hand to hand or at rifle's length over ditch and hedge, and dashed up against the château walls. From the slits made by those hammers in the night, now spurted innumerable orange jets, and the blue columns of foot fell like the apples shaken down by the bombardment. The rear ranks advanced valiantly over this windfall of their comrades' bodies, but they could not scale the walls. The movement had been premature, not at all carrying out Napoleon's plan of battle. He must order in Foy's division to save Jerome's, use up more precious reserves. It was another in the long chain of blunders, and he cursed bitterly his brother's stupid valor.

And now as he stood on the mound he saw another apparition, a huge body of men emerging from the wood in the northeast corner of the stage, and themselves like a moving wood. With the facile confidence of this fatal week, he smiled triumphantly.

“Grouchy is through at last!” he told his officers.

He had no sooner made this rash statement than a squad of *éclaireurs* rode up with a prisoner—one of Blücher's Black Hussars.

Napoleon swung on the Black Hussar, pointed at the moving wood.

“Whose are those men?”

The officer confessed. “Von Bülow's, Sire,” he said.

“But how many? Come now, the truth!”

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“Thirty-seven thousand, your Majesty.”

“And that is all? You are sure?”

“It is all, your Majesty.”

So the Black Hussar concealed the important fact—that two more corps of Blücher were swinging down the road from Wavre.

Napoleon’s brows were now knit. Off he must send Gudin to order d’Aumont’s light chasseurs, with Count Lobau’s foot supporting, to engage that apparition; and it was hard to see that eight thousand trot off the stage, leaving him with but sixty thousand.

A little later he looked at his watch. Three o’clock. Four hours before sundown, he had known many such hours before, filled with the activities only a soldier can appreciate—the ranging with keen eye the field, the checking move with counter-move, the swift decisions, superhuman efforts, the virtue going out of him to his men, the battle tumult, the long rolling surge of magnificent charges to the thunder of the guns. That is life when one has known it so long. And in the midst of it, one does not count on those hours as being the last he shall know. And if he contemplates the sunset, it is but as a mile-stone, the end of an episode, not of a whole career and an empire.

Still, over the emperor there came a sudden transformation. The fatal fool’s-paradise calm left him. The clouds of doubt which had hovered over his uneasy generals lifted. For a moment they saw again the sun of Austerlitz, and their eyes shone.

At once the mound became all joyous activity. The imperial bow had tautened. His commands had all the remembered vibrance. These ringing in their ears, his aides

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galloped from the mound, on smoking horses, like a flight of arrows shot to all corners of the field.

Upon the hill, bands began to play to hearten the columns forming for attack. Those columns moved down all over the slope behind him; and from the next quarter-hour on, the shallow green saucer was filled to the brim with racing colorful tides swinging up the slope to the ridge, foaming round the defending batteries, vanishing over the hill, only to reappear, front battalions flung back on the rear, recede down into the valley, there to reform and race up again.

Under the screeching arcs of the guns, d'Erlon's foot first marched forward, across the valley and up the slope, two hundred front, shoulder to shoulder and many files deep. On their flanks hovered the green mounted chasseurs, restraining their chargers to keep pace with the infantry.

As he saw this brave array, so closely packed, legs, arms, bayonets in matchless unison, Napoleon shuddered. Another blunder of his new generals! That close formation was disastrous. Shot tore great rents in the green and blue squares, ever dwindling in both length and breadth, but ever closing in and swinging upward.

But they gained the ridge, sabered the gunners; the front ranks crowded over and dropped behind the hill, then rushed back, not in platoons now but mixed with Gordon plaids and scarlet Inniskillings and the mounted Scots Grays, who rolled them downward to the valley where, with a forlorn valor, they turned at bay.

In the east, meanwhile, toward the knot of gables in Papelotte, a shining cloud of cuirassiers moved majestically forward. Suddenly, at the foot of the slope, where

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storms had made of field and road a quagmire, they were halted. The shining cloud was turned into a whirlpool of bright little waves making no advance. And down from the knot of gables and the eastern section of the ridge the allied dragoons raced; smote the whirlpool; flattened the little waves; then streamed across the eastern edge of the stage, after such remnants as could extricate themselves, to a French battery. They were dismantling it, when a reserve of French cavalry dashed down the slope and set the dragoons racing back over the eastern border again.

Though the valley was fuller of life and action, the scene had not changed much, as far as positions went, except that more of his regiments had moved forward in front of the mound where he sat his horse, the gray core of a bright and constantly changing circle of aigrets and plumes, shakos and casques, and bay, white, and black horses, in the gayest of housings.

This mound had been well chosen for observation, lying almost in the exact geometrical center of the valley and making a rounded rise in the deep of the saucer. From it he could see every movement except the smaller maneuvers hidden by orchard or copse and those of the duke's reserves behind the ridge. All the flexibility of the contesting armies seemed to be along the bow of the ridge, curving outwardly from him. The ends of the bow—west in the orchard and château, east, at Papelotte—where the troops were locked in death-grips, were almost stationary. It was almost as though these tips were the outstretched hands of wrestlers locked together, as the bodies between swayed sinuously back and forth.

There was one other seemingly stationary point, and

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that at a point to which he was constantly directing his gaze—the village of Planchenoit in the southeast corner of the stage and dangerously in the rear of his right wing. On this von Bülow had flung the full strength of his corps, and seven times the village had been lost and re-taken. But Napoleon had further depleted his reserves by sending in the Middle Guard; and the tide of battle swayed so little back and forth as to be now almost imperceptible.

He looked at his watch. Half-past four. And still no sign of Grouchy on the eastern horizon, only those gray-green hordes coming on like locusts. To some his cause would have seemed desperate. Through casualties and the departure of Lobau's men and the supporting cavalry, his force had been reduced to fifty-six thousand. The duke and von Bülow already had double his numbers on the scene, and only God knew where was Blücher! But on Blücher he would not calculate. He did not dare to. It might have been possible to withdraw from this circle that now surrounded three quarters of his army, instead of trying to break that stout scarlet center; but a brilliant victory might now bring him peace, and he had before broken stout centers with inferior numbers. Despite his occasional lapses and his failing body, all his reverses and the blunders of his generals, his campaign had been well planned, and his genius in its twilight shone brighter than any other commander's on that field. Daring to the end, he would win or go down, attacking.

So another of his hammer-strokes—a flash of the old fire—and a timely bit of psychology! He would send in his cavalry en masse, recall Ney from the right, place

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him at their head, call him “bravest of the brave” once more. That touch had never failed with the wild Ney; up that ridge he would go.

The aides were off; more shining clouds trotted down the slope, drew up in front of the mound, and a figure galloped madly from Hougoumont Wood. The emperor galloped down the mound to meet him, reined in before the assembled legions, called out in a voice so stentorian that even above the din of battle all the ranged ranks could hear: “Marshal Ney! Bravest of the brave! It is on you we rely to break that center!” And the wild Ney, chagrined over his dilatory tactics of the day before at Quatre-Bras, his gilt-red collar almost choking him as he thought of the Bourbons to whom he had sworn to deliver this little man now exhorting him, drew his sword; grew purple; foamed at the mouth; tumbled with his horse, suddenly shot under him; mounted another lent by a trooper; and galloped up and down the ranks shouting, cursing, urging them on.

They needed not the whip-lash of profanity, and broke from the standstill into a mad gallop—red lancers, green chasseurs, shining cuirassiers—charged up the ridge in the face of the duke’s iron muzzles, and foamed round the batteries. Then again the duke brought up from his reserves behind the hill the bright Scotch plaids, the scarlet Inniskillings, and the Royals; and a hand-to-hand conflict followed, there on the top of the hill, which all in the valley would have stopped to watch had they not been so busily engaged themselves.

But now more troops must go to support them, and another shining cloud, under Kellermann, swept down and up, across the green, and joined in the mêlée on the

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sky-line. Eleven times they took and lost the batteries on the ridge; but at last the colorful waves broke and tumbled downward; reformed in the deep of the saucer, and reinforced now by more gleaming battalions, struck up once more, only to break on the scarlet rock, and tumble back, shattered and decimated.

Another assault—the seventh major one of the day, the third by Ney, now on his third horse, leading the blue foot—captured the farm buildings just below the ridge and now enveloped in swirls of smoke and lit by bright pennons of flame bursting from timber and thatch. It was the first real success in his efforts to smash that center; but that center was dented, not broken; and it was already six o'clock.

Once more his eye ranged the field covered with cannon-smoke, racing colorful tides, and confused struggling masses of men. Reille still gripped Hougoumont Wood, but had not wrested the château from the eagle-winged helmets; Guyot and Lefebvre-Desnouettes were deadlocked with the Hanoverian horn-hats and Dutch kepis; and the Young Guard stoutly resisted the onslaughts of the gray-green landwehr and Black Hussars at Planchenoit. Ah! everywhere they were holding on nobly—good fellows—brave fellows! But his reserves were almost exhausted. The valley was covered with crumpled figures whose gay uniforms, at a little distance, looked like discarded bright ribbons of the Legion of Honor. The green slope was fairly strewn with these, while cuirasses and helmets lay in the grass like so many spent coins. And, above, the ridge was still fringed with scarlet, not fallen but erect; and as if in omen, the sinking sun turned the whole western sky to British red.

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The emperor took out his snuff-box. Very strangely in the illumination of burning farm-house and château, the red of the sunset and the carnage, the child's portrait smiled forth in its delicate blues, flesh-tints and gold. He snapped the lid shut. No signs to the east? Well, he must make the last cast, send in the Guard, salute Ney for the last time.

Not one of the brave fellows paused to wonder if this might be the last time they would march forward together. As he handed over the legions to his wild marshal, now astride a fourth horse and blood all over from a scalp-wound, they thought only of the gray-coated figure and raised a thunderous cheer, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" that rolled up to the batteries silhouetted against the sunset red, on the ridge. And the figures outlined up there by the guns paused too, to watch this last charge, this heroic exit of the finest body of men ever gathered on any field.

They struck across the valley, up the slope, the foot with matchless precision no thundering guns could disturb; the horse trotting briskly by their sides in the old beautiful waves of Austerlitz. Waves of chasseur's yellow-faced green, grenadier's green faced with red, éclaireur's lavender, hussar's plum, and cuirassier's flame-color! Waves foaming with streaming manes and tails, white plume, yellow pompon, and orchid aigret! Waves crested with casques and sabers, and serrated, as they gathered momentum and riders doubled on the ground for the spring or rose to the apex of the gallop! And waves of hoarsened voices as exultant as those of the sea and all lit by a fiercer light than that of the sun, from those thousands of eyes burning over their chin-straps with

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love of glory and the man who had shown them Glory's bright face!

But now the watching ranks on the ridge no longer watched. They could be seen wildly working their ramrods against the red disk of the sun. Then the disk was obscured as the cannon spoke down into the valley.

The smoke cleared. With narrower fronts, the Guard was still galloping upward, the mounted ranks in the van, the foot, with bayonets out, not far to the rear. And they gained the ridge, foamed round the batteries, when on front and both flanks broke the storm from other guns which the duke had just wheeled into action—then—O God of battles! the Madonna of Victories, whom he did not often petition, help him now! The Old Guard had broken and the bright waves were rolling back into the valley.

But they were not defeated. Again, under the cursing Ney, they had rallied and with three fourths of their numbers were charging up in the face of the duke's now trebled guns. It seemed as if he were forever whisking regiments out from behind that hill and wheeling new batteries up to the sky-line. Still, they gained the crest; were engaged with the Scots Grays, scarlet Inniskillings, Dutch, Belgians, and Gordon plaids. Then once more they rolled back into the valley.

Never would they charge again. It was beyond human power. Ah! but they would!—Yes, below the mound they were reforming again! As undauntedly they drew up, he gazed down on them sorrowfully. He loved them and wanted to spare them. But there was a chance so long as the light lasted. And death in battle was what a soldier wished for.

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The sun had sunk now, all but one small curve of scintillating fire; and suddenly his features were lighted with a last gleam of hope. There to the east, another apparition—great bodies of men streaming out of St.-Lambert Wood and all over the horizon. God! Grouchy at last! He knew he would come! The very souls of his staff seemed to vibrate in that cry of “Grouchy!” which reached the last battalions of the Guard as they sprang forward. Then another and contrary roar came from the east all along the lines to meet it: “Blücher, Blücher!”

It was another stroke of Fate. He had not been able to tell in the oncoming twilight that those uniforms were gray and green; that Blücher, not Grouchy, had come swinging down the road from Wavre. Those hordes of locusts were descending on his right flank; he was outnumbered now by more than three to one.

The last gleam was gone now; but it was still light enough to see the last charge of the Guard up the slope, feebler now, for horse and man were exhausted of all but spirit; and the gun chorus was far heavier. The wonder was that they reached the crest at all; but it was a forlorn cause; and they rolled downward as before but were now pursued away into the valley by the allied horsemen.

As the guard rallied in the deep of the saucer, drew in their scattered remnants, shoulder to shoulder, bayonets out—the pathetic ghosts of the old bright squares—to defend the mound, he looked up and down the valley. His lines were battered, dented in, swaying; but almost everywhere they seemed to hold their original positions. As a swimmer submerged in the depths of the ocean is conscious of the weight of the surrounding waters, so he could feel the pressure on those thin lines on every inch of his body.

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For a final quarter-hour of the afterglow they still held. Then, suddenly as a violin which has been making brave martial music snaps, or a strong man who has fought long and well against overwhelming odds goes to pieces and breaks into deep racking sobs, everywhere ail over the field those brave lines broke. And it seemed, too, as if from everywhere, from all over that field, a groan went up from the army, the broken body of France. Officers, faithful to the end, tried to rally the broken squares; but there were no rocks around which to rally. The units were units no longer, but milling masses of horse, artillery, and foot, all entangled together and driven like sheep by organized wolves, the English and Prussians who were bent on a bloody vengeance for two decades of defeats at the hands of the conqueror.

So the body of France that was her army expired; and vanished the glory that was the old Empire.

As for the head of that army, he recoiled with the shock; sat his horse, stupefied, then tried to recover. The rout was worse to the east; and three battalions of the Guard, the old granite columns of Marengo, rallied around him. They had no thought of themselves but only of him who, though the Empire was dead, would forever be their emperor.

With these as a core, he thought to rally the streams running by the mound in the twilight, and seized his sword. But the granite columns drew all around him to face the thousands of English horsemen bearing down on them. And his staff laid hands on his bridle, turned his horse's head to the rear. For a few brief seconds he hesitated, he whom no fear of death had ever made hesi-

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tate before. Nor was it now such a fear that overcame him. He felt suddenly old, inert, and very weary. And the slaughter all around him which once had seemed so necessary to a soldier, for the good of the Empire and the security of men, now appalled him. In this profound reaction, empire, glory, even a soldier's death, seemed futile, empty. It was only three seconds, or so it seemed to his staff, that this indecision seemed to fasten on him. But the delay was fatal. In that time they had rushed him to the rear of the granite columns, into the stream of fugitives who bore him off the field. Fate now had denied him this last grace, death at the head of his guard.

Behind him now, he could hear an officer's voice—Cambronne's or Michel's, he could not tell which—shouting out in the twilight, "The Old Guard dies but never surrenders!" and a ghostly shout of "Long live the Emperor!" as the last company went down before the charging thousands. And frantic at the lost opportunity, he drew his sword, tried to rally the fugitives to fight his way back, to summon the old magic, the old vibrant voice. But these were gone forever. No more would he dominate men and compel them to deeds of glory.

Then something snapped within him. His face grew pallid; his head sank forward on his chest; the reins dropped from his inert hand. As friendly ships are torn from each other by the raging torrent, so his staff had been parted from him by the rout. There were left only one officer and his valet to guide his horse. When he finally aroused himself a little from the stupor, he took out his snuff-box mechanically. The conqueror taking snuff as he rode from the last field! It was the supreme touch of Tragedy.

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When the curtain falls so swiftly, the chronicling too must be swift. He came to Philippeville, slept the sleep of the exhausted and profoundly shocked, and finally reached Paris by night, stricken, pallid, unshaven, an almost unrecognizable figure, and sought refuge in the Elysée Palace.

Here he lay on a sofa, rousing himself once in a while to issue defiances to the rebellious deputies, who would now depose him, or to make suggestions for the defense of Paris with the troops of Grouchy, who had been found far from the field of battle. But there was nothing of the old ring to these bulletins. They sounded hollow. He was at last merely going through the motions.

And when Lucien came to him with a proposal for another *coup d'état*, a second Brumaire, he would not lift a hand against the government. "Will you not dare?" asked Lucien, who was now in his element and was showing up better than his famous brother. But then Lucien had been storing up his energies as he plowed for old coins on his farm at Canino, while his brother Napoleon was galloping up and down the world.

"It is no use, my dear brother," he said. "I would not plunge France in another civil war. Besides, I have already dared too much. I am spent, exhausted." And as if he had just realized the tragedy for the first time, Lucien's face went white, and, shaking all over, he left the palace.

It was sad for all who loved him; but there were not many of these to be now at his side. With tears in her eyes, Hortense watched him as he wearily rose and went to the window to gaze down on a group of workmen who came to cheer the old emperor. "Ah! it is they who

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love me!" he said wistfully and waved to them from the balcony. But the gesture was perfunctory; and they too went away with heavy hearts.

She noted, too, when she got him out to Malmaison after the second abdication, that at times he ate enormously, as if Nature were crying out for repairs to the punished body. But he had always been so abstemious that it was disagreeable to see him now overeating like any mechanic from the Marais. Then again he would eat nothing at all, though she did her best to tempt him with the few delicacies she knew he liked.

And his slumber now was so heavy that it resembled a torpor. Sometimes she gazed at him as he lay on an ottoman, while the provisional government back in Paris deliberated on his fate; and remembering how he looked when she had pleaded with him for her mother in the rue Chantereine—the rapier-like wiriness, the brilliant eyes—or the magnetic presence of the Tuileries, almost she could have cried out. His body, through fatigue and disease, was now so much grosser; and though the head would never lose its noble molding, the fire had gone from the eyes, and from the mouth all the decisiveness and charm which, strangely commingled, had always marked it.

It was a relief to find, toward the end of this brief stay, that rest had restored him a little. Never again would he be the same man; but something of his poise and charm returned. And she was proud to find that in his fall he cherished no bitter anger even against the traitors. He bore his misfortunes, she thought, with considerable dignity and not a little of sweetness.

With him she would have gladly rushed into exile, as

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would his mother and sister who were held in Rome. But Fouché, who was again in the saddle, and chairman of all the festivities planned for the Bourbons, had other designs. One faithful soul, General Bertrand, he would allow the ex-emperor for companionship in his exile. The other temperamental retainers the spy allotted him Napoleon scarcely knew.

And just where this last asylum was to be no one hinted at. He might, if he cared to, they said, sail for America. Still, Fouché saw to it that there was a guard all around Malmaison, also that the English ministers were secretly posted as to the route he would take to the coast.

At last the day came for his departure from Malmaison and France whom he had brought up to the summits of glory. And Fouché and his guard and carriage waited without.

For a farewell gift, Hortense had given him a diamond necklace, thinking it might provide him with funds if he ever should need them; and he, she said, had given her, given them all, so much. The stones she inclosed, each in a fold of silk, and with her own hands sewed these packets to his braces. This task done, she had only time to kiss him farewell, then watched him slowly descend the steps in the old grenadier's coat, enter the coach, the carriage roll down the drive, past her mother's violets, and turn the archway. Then the last segment of wheel disappeared.

He was silent all the way to the coast, but he was not making any plans for a return journey. Sadly he watched the fair landscape of France roll by for the last time; and when he spoke it was to ask Ali for water or to get

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him some cherries he saw on a tree which reminded him of his boyhood. One remark only he made about the past, to Bertrand.

“It is the last act only that is remembered,” he said. “They will forget a hundred victories and speak only of Waterloo.”

And once, as they passed a wayside shrine, he observed:

“Bertrand, they often quote a cynicism of mine about religion. But do they think a *bon mot* shows the real state of the heart! After my death I desire that I be buried with all the rites of the Catholic religion; so strong are the chains of childhood’s sentiment. But it is more than sentiment.” He pointed at the hanging figure. “His is the only empire not built by hands and with stone and not supported by cannon. Yet it is the only empire that will endure.”

When they reached the port he seemed to have so little of the will to struggle left in him that he refused the chance of escape offered by two resolute captains. They would get their ships, they swore, through the English blockade at night. But it was a forlorn hope. They never would have run that gauntlet. Fouché had done his work well.

So he made his last gesture, one not nearly so happy as the bold diplomatic strokes with which he had astonished Europe. This time, too, England was astonished—by his surrender to the English captains. But though the eagle’s wings were broken beyond repair, she did not display the generosity he expected and which he had so often displayed himself. Possibly she did not know those wings were broken, and feared for her brood as well as for lost shipments and sales. Her cruelty may have only been

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human. At any rate, instead of selecting some quiet retreat where he might end his days in peace, as she would have for any king by right divine, she condemned him to a rock in the wild Atlantic.

The shock was great, but he stood it manfully. When the time came to embark, he faced his captors with graciousness and tried to soothe his fellow-exiles, though they, he knew, might return in a few years while he lay moldering on that rock.

Altogether his attitude surprised some of the English visitors who came to the ship and who were of finer grain than their rulers. Here, said they, is no boor, but a great gentleman! But the government undeceived them. He *was* a boor, an arch-fiend, and a bloodthirsty monster. That settled it, they thought, for all Eternity! . . .

But the ship was headed out for the open sea. Soon it became a toy ship; the little figure in the grenadier's coat a black dot; and then was swallowed up in the blue immensity.

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